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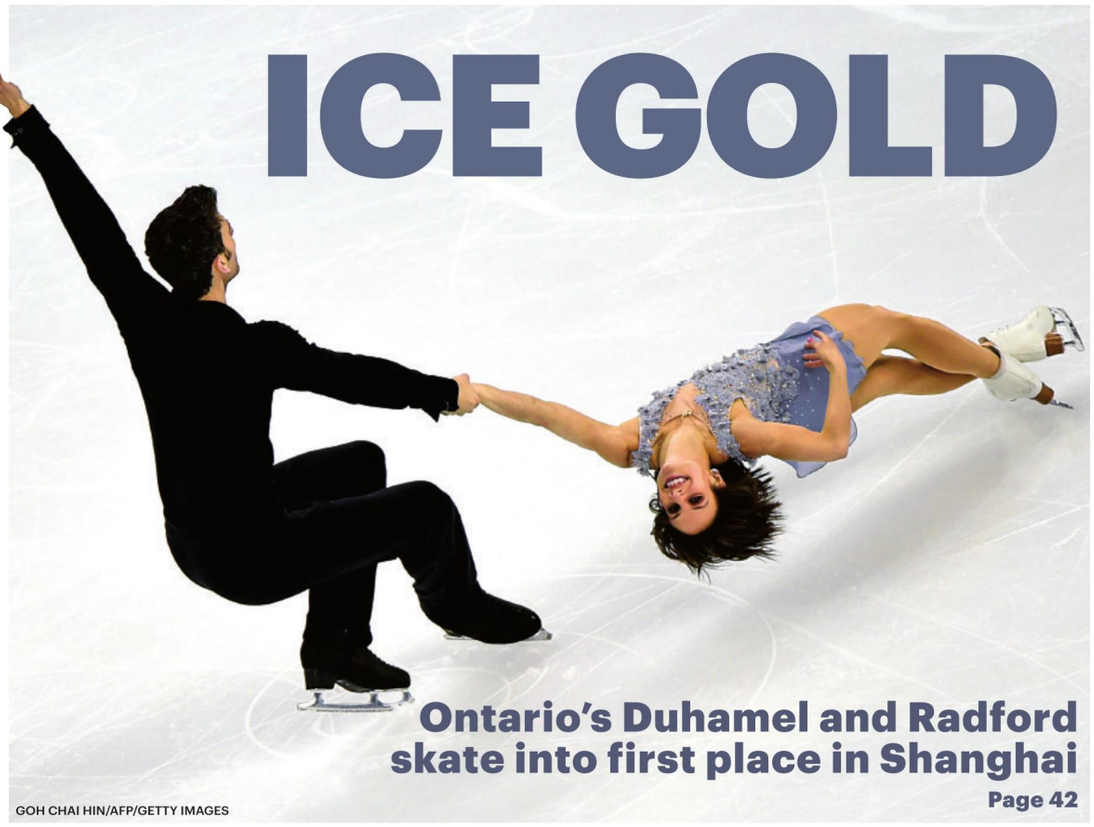

ICE GOLD

Ontario's Duhamel and Radford skate into first place in Shanghai

Page 42

GOH CHAI HIN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Strike at U of T ends

EDUCATION

School president thanks students for being patient

The University of Toronto strike is over with little more than a week left before final exams.

Members of CUPE 3902 agreed Thursday to enter binding arbitration and will return to work Friday.

Union members, which include teaching assistants, graduate assistants, tutors and course instructors, walked off the job nearly a month ago after rejecting a contract offer.

Talks have continued since then, but weren't progressing, university president Meric Gertler said when calling for binding arbitration earlier this week.

He issued a statement Thursday thanking students for their "patience" and acknowledging the "anxiety" they've faced, "especially those who are in the final year of their programs."

"A number of challenges remain, as we work together to return to regular functioning over the next few weeks," Gertler said.

While many classes taught by U of T faculty weren't affected by the strike, those led by union members were cancelled, leaving some students to wonder if they'd get credit. Other students have said assignments weren't being marked, work that is usually done by assistants, even if class remained in session.

Money is at the heart of the labour dispute.

The university's latest offer raised the minimum funding package available to graduate students from $15,000 to $17,500 annually. Those who voted against it have said the increase failed to address underlying wage and job-security issues.

The funding package is a mix of grants, scholarships, wages and other offerings. METRO

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Your essential daily news
WEEKEND, March 27-29, 2015

Resto gets one heck of a tip

LESLIEVILLE

Patron starts campaign to keep struggling restaurant open

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

Christopher Mitchell went for breakfast this week at a Leslieville restaurant, only to be told it couldn't serve him.

Back of House had literally run out of ingredients.

Owner Charles Crothall opened up to Mitchell, explaining that he was running out of money, unable to pay his workers and dealing with equipment failure.

Mitchell decided he had to help. He headed immediately to markets in Leslieville, bought some food and delivered it to the Carlaw Avenue restaurant. Back of House was able to open that morning — and serve Mitchell some breakfast.

He was impressed with what he got.

"That was the best bacon sandwich I've ever eaten in my life," he said.

But he was even more impressed by the way Crothall operates, using local ingredients from local stores.

"With that statement, I quickly knew I had to get the ball rolling," said Mitchell. "This isn't just a restaurateur but a real artist and someone who has the community at heart."

Charles Crothall, owner of Back of House restaurant in Leslieville, preps for evening service Thursday. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

FUNDRAISING

Perk for helping
— Anyone who donates $18 or more to the campaign gets a free meal.

— The fundraiser will continue into early April, looking to collect $7,000 to get Back of House back on track.

Mitchell quickly started an online fundraising campaign to keep Back of House afloat. He's raised more than $3,000 in less than three days.

"I'm in love with Leslieville right now," said Mitchell. "Many such places have gone down and under, you know; it is of a great value to keep that place open."

> **"I was pretty much to my lowest point, looking for ways to get out of business.**
> Charles Crothall, owner of Back of House restaurant

Crothall, who opened the eatery about a year ago, is thankful to the community for the support he's getting.

"I love having people at my home, and this restaurant is my home," he said.

LOBBYING

Tory staffer censured

A senior member of Mayor John Tory's staff has been scolded by Toronto's lobbyist registrar for activities as a lobbyist at city hall in 2012.

In a report released Thursday, Linda Gehrke found Tory's principal secretary, Vic Gupta, and Kim Wright were both working for Sussex Strategy Group and put a city staff member in an apparent conflict of interest.

To settle the matter, Sussex agreed to properly report its lobbying activity, have lobbyists attend training sessions on the rules and consult with Gehrke's office on a "compliance protocol" to prevent further breaches.

In a statement, Tory said he expects his staff to operate with the "highest standards of integrity," but it's not reasonable to expect perfection.

Gupta and Wright, on behalf of a charity, lobbied a city employee who was writing a report with recommendations to city council on dealing with clothing donation boxes.

Some councillors wanted the boxes banned. Gupta and Wright told the city employee about the importance of box revenue to their client's charitable activities and suggested ways to identify legitimate charities.

The problem is that the city employee is married to a colleague of Gupta and Wright who also lobbies city officials for Sussex.

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The actual length of Toronto's twisting and turning PATH is a matter of dispute. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

PATH's Guinness World Record title questioned

INFRASTRUCTURE

Reddit user claims walkway isn't as long as the city says it is

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

Is the PATH a fraud?

According to the city, Toronto's underground network of pedestrian pathways is 30 kilometres long, earning it a Guinness World Record for the largest subterranean shopping complex.

However, one local Redditor claims the city's PATH math is ... ambitious.

"There's no way it's true," the user — who goes by the handle "vugg" — posted Thursday.

"A GIS (geographic information system) analysis of the system shows that '30 kilometres' is an extreme exaggeration."

Vugg instead claims the PATH is a mere 12.7 kilometres long.

To arrive at that number, vugg took the city's map for the PATH and measured each individual line segment. Vugg excluded the underground concourses at places like MaRS because they're "not contiguous with the rest of the system," as well as elements like "service corridors and fire exits."

"I suspect the Guinness Book of World Records would strip PATH of its title if they ever bothered to verify the city's calculation," vugg said.

James Parakh, manager of urban design for Toronto, defended the city's numbers.

> **I suspect the Guinness Book of World Records would strip PATH of its title if they ever bothered to verify the city's calculation.**
> Reddit user vugg

"There's obviously some things that are off," he said after viewing vugg's work. "For example, if there's shops on two levels that has to be included.

"You need to count Eaton Centre three times because it's three levels. And First Canadian Place is two levels."

Parakh also noted vugg's analysis appears to exclude the concourse at Aura condominiums in College Park, which was recently added, as well as the portion of the PATH extending to Water Park Place on Queen's Quay.

The exact length of the PATH is always changing, Parakh said. However, he's adamant that the city's figure includes "every single corridor."

Vugg's post did spark a lengthy discussion on Reddit, where skeptical users tried to find the missing 17 kilometres.

"I believe what they meant was that when you get lost walking in circles in the PATH, it would feel like you're walking 29 kilometres," joked one Redditor.

SHUTTERED

Mental health crisis response centre shuts down

A 24-hour crisis response program in Toronto is shutting down.

The Community Crisis Response Program, which has been funded by the Scarborough Hospital for the last 18 years, is shutting down Friday.

The $1.2-million program provides telephone crisis intervention, case management and mobile crisis visits to people suffering mental health problems. It has a dedicated service for seniors in crisis and an emergency department diversion service.

It was run by Saint Elizabeth Health Care and funded by the Scarborough Hospital.

"The Scarborough Hospital recently made a decision to terminate its contract with Saint Elizabeth, resulting in the closure of the program, effective March 27," Saint Elizabeth spokeswoman Madonna Gallo said.

She said the agency is transferring its work to other community mental health agencies, but declined to answer whether all of the services will continue.

A total of 33 full- and part-time jobs have been eliminated, most of them held by community mental health workers. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

7,019

Last year, the program's crisis support line received 7,019 calls and its mobile crisis team made 1,331 visits.
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Not every Toronto Raptors fan was down in the dumps during the playoff-clinching loss to the Chicago Bulls. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Raptors buzz still has teeth: Analyst

BASKETBALL

Expect team to once again inspire city come playoffs

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

The Toronto Raptors sealed a playoff spot in a way that didn't quite get fans thrilled.

"You normally want to clinch playoffs by winning games, not by math where you're not as bad as the next guy," said Zarar Siddiqi, writer and basketball analyst for the Raptors Republic blog.

The inopportune twist — which saw two other teams lose to push the Raps into the postseason — is hardly doing much to get create a buzz on the Toronto sports scene.

But, in a city where other major sports don't offer much of an alternative, the Raptors can still count on big support from fans when the playoffs start, Siddiqi said.

"I'd be surprised if fans don't fill the Jurassic Park during playoffs," he said, adding the team can still gain momentum from the remainder of the season if they correct their recent struggles. "There's no reason not to be optimistic about the future of this team."

> **There's no reason not to be optimistic about the future of this team.**
> Zarar Siddiqi, basketball analyst

The lone Canadian NBA team has won just six of its last 19 games since the All-Star break. They started the season with a solid 24-7 record.

The recent struggles can be attributed to injuries suffered earlier by DeMar DeRozan and, later, Kyle Lowry. When those big names are off the court, it disrupts the team's chemistry, said Siddiqi.

The Raps' somewhat quiet move into the playoffs isn't exactly paying dividends for businesses. Teedot Apparel, which sells Raptors customized hoodies, T-shirts and other products, hasn't registered any "increase yet because they have been playing bad lately," said JR Villareal, founder.

When (and if) that changes, things will turn around," he said. "Whenever they win, we get more Toronto-themed shirts sales."

CRIME

Man gets 7 years for 'vile' attack on girl

A "troubled" man who snatched a sleeping five-year-old girl from her bed and sexually assaulted her in a neighbour's yard violated her sense of security "in the most vile way," a judge found Thursday in sentencing him to seven years in prison.

Ryan Belbin, 31, was found guilty in October of breaking and entering, abduction of a person under 14, sexual assault and sexual interference in the 2011 Boxing Day incident in Toronto's north end.

Belbin's actions have caused severe "emotional and psychological distress" for the girl and her family, Judge Nola Garton noted in giving her decision.

"As a result of her groggy state of mind when she was abducted, and the fact that her father carried her back into the house after the assault, the victim believes that her father was responsible for taking her outside in the middle of the night, putting his hand over her mouth and hurting her," Garton said.

> **It is not known what the long-term psychological impact of the offences will be on her.**
> Judge Nola Garton

After seeking professional advice, the girl's parents have decided not to tell her the truth, believing it would be more traumatizing for her to hear a stranger abducted her from her bed, the judge said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TRANSPORTATION

Closure stalling truck driver testing

Ontario's largest commercial truck testing facility, the DriveTest Centre in Woodbridge, is slated to close at 5 p.m. Friday because its lease was not renewed.

That closure — announced online Wednesday by DriveTest nearly a month after the government learned the lease was to end — is forcing would-be truckers who had scheduled road test appointments at Woodbridge on or after March 30 to take their tests in Brampton or Downsview.

The news has caught some off guard.

Semina Cheema, controller at Pine Valley Driving Academy in Etobicoke, said she was "blindsided" by the Ministry of Transportation when she was told of the closure this week.

"This is ridiculous," Cheema said, noting that she has had to put lessons on hold for more than a dozen students because she can't promise them a swift road test.

"It's totally unethical. You don't deal with any school like that."

Serco, the private multinational company hired by the province to conduct all driving exams, operates DriveTest.

DriveTest was notified on Feb. 27 by a new landlord that the lease would not be renewed and that as a result the location would be closed, according to Patrick Searle, spokesperson for Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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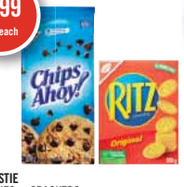

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Lights, cameras, film fest action grip T.O.

Deborah Hernandez
Metro | Toronto

Toronto film buffs will be having their heyday this weekend.

Six different film festivals are taking place all over the city starting Friday.

Even if you aren't a film enthusiast, it isn't quite warm enough just yet to frolic outside, so you might want to consider checking out some of the films playing at these festivals.

Simon Vidoczy, manager of the Royal Cinema in Toronto's Little Italy, preps the concession stand before an onslaught of film fans swarm the cinema for the Canadian Film Fest's screening of Relative Happiness on Thursday. The festival is one of a handful of similar cinema to-dos happening in the city this weekend. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

MAR. 20-28

Water Docs Film Festival
You can still catch the final leg of the Water Docs Film Festival as it wraps up this weekend at the AGO's Jackman Hall. This year, the nine-day festival presents nine feature films and dozens of short films about water, along with panel discussions with filmmakers and special guests. Stan Gibson, founder of the festival, says, "The goal of Water Docs is to unite and engage audiences."

MAR. 24-APR. 2

Human Rights Watch Film Festival
Crises of human rights are happening everywhere around the world and this festival showcases eight features that tell these stories. Before each film, there are introductions and discussions by experts on the themes the film explores. The Human Rights Watch says the festival is "to bear witness to human rights violations and create a forum ... to empower audiences."

MAR. 25-28

Canadian Film Fest
This is the ninth Canadian Film Fest, which is a celebration of Canadian films and filmmaking talent. Twenty-four films are premiering here this weekend, both short and feature films, at the historic Royal Theatre in Little Italy. There are also workshops, meet-and-greets, and panel discussions. One of the festival's goals is to elevate Canadian film as an art as well as a viable commercial industry.

MAR. 26-28

Reel Artists Film Festival
The 12th annual Reel Artists Film Festival exhibits documentaries with the theme of risk-taking in art by focusing on the lives of different artists. Short and feature-length films will be screened on a variety of subjects, from art forgeries to political cartoons. The directors introduce each film before the screening, with panel discussions and keynote speeches. The festival opens this Friday at the TIFF Bell Lightbox Theatre.

MAR. 27-29

Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour
The Banff Mountain Film Festival is a touring festival showcasing films with a wide variety of topics, ranging from the environment to mountain sports. The festival travels to 30 countries, like China, South Africa and Scotland, screening a selection of the best films about sports and adventure. This year the Toronto festival will screen five to eight short films at Bloor Hot Docs Cinema.

MAR. 28

Toronto Nepali Film Festival
Films about Nepalis take the stage at this film festival which is in its sixth year. It is open to both Nepali and non-Nepali filmmakers who are dedicated to sharing the stories of Nepali people, both those living abroad or in Nepal. The festival runs all day Saturday. This year, seven different features and several short films — fictional and documentaries — will be screened at the University of Toronto.

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The art of fashion shows

HIGH STRESS

Audience can't see the chaos backstage, producer says

Familiar cues come with every fashion show: "Quiet," "Cue the music," "House lights up," "First look: Go."

They're all well-known to Erika Larva, the self-professed "mechanic" behind World MasterCard Fashion Week.

As show producer, backstage manager and co-ordinator, Larva is a crucial cog behind the scenes at one of the biggest events in the Canadian fashion industry's yearly calendar.

Larva spoke with Tostar News Service during a precisely scheduled 10-minute window between Mélissa Nepton and David Dixon's shows at fashion week Tuesday.

"By the time I say, 'Go, girl,' it takes about eight seconds for the girl to show up (on the runway).

"When she gets there, the girl already on the runway is just about to turn around, and you see the next one coming down."

A behind-the-scenes glimpse of a show at Toronto's fashion week. ELIZABETH BEDDALL/METRO

The works starts before fashion week, with Larva meeting with the individual designers to go over their creative vision for the show, discussing elements like technical cues, music and logos.

> **I cannot have an empty runway.**
> Show producer Erika Larva

On site, Larva and a seven-person crew from her company, Monarch Events Group, run rehearsals on the hour throughout the day, before the main events begin in late afternoon. Every 60 minutes, they move the next designer from a prep area to backstage, help dress the models, make sure they're in the right place and facilitate outfit changes.

"Fashion shows are not like a commercial or a movie where you can do take two, take 50," Larva said. "We have to get it right on the first take."

"Getting it right" involves training some volunteers in the fast-paced, high-stress role of dressers. Changes, Larva said, can only last about a minute. Typically, a model swaps outfits twice during a 15-minute show.

"We brief the dressers; we teach them how to do it. Like everything else, it takes practice. It's important for them to understand the lineup, not to get makeup (on the outfits), make sure there aren't any price tags on the bottom of the shoes, that sort of thing."

Things can — and do — go awry, said Larva, but keeping the chaos behind the scenes is her first priority.

"There's mayhem back here, and (viewers) don't want to know about it. All I know is that I need a model on that runway because I cannot have an empty runway." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

INVESTIGATION

Powder not dangerous: Fire dept.

Toronto Fire responded to two calls of unidentified white powder — one at the University of Toronto campus and the other in Scarborough.

Both investigations found that the substance was not dangerous. At around noon on Thursday, Toronto paramedics got a call to a Canada Post office near Midland and Progress avenues. According to police, a package containing white powder was found.

One person was transported to the hospital for an assessment after being in contact with the powder. Colleagues who were within close proximity of the package were quarantined.

Toronto Fire confirmed that the powder was a mixture of white food substances.

The second incident occurred at U of T campus, at 21 Sussex Ave. The building holds the campus police, Varsity newspaper, the Community Safety Office, and a number of shared student spaces.

The powder, in an envelope, was later determined to be glitter. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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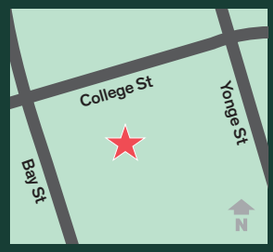

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Ford to apologize for 'hurtful' slurs

POLITICS

City's integrity commissioner says ex-mayor will say sorry

Coun. Rob Ford plans to apologize to Torontonians at next week's city council meeting for "egregious" and "unbecoming" racial slurs he uttered during his scandal-plagued term as mayor of Canada's biggest city.

"It was harmful, contrary to the (city's) Code of Conduct and unbecoming of his office for then-mayor Rob Ford to use racial slurs," says city integrity commissioner Val Jepson in a report released Thursday.

Her investigation was sparked by a July 8 complaint by a citizen who said Ford's words, including "n-----," were "hurtful to him and others as members of Toronto's racialized communities."

In light of the serious nature of Ford's widely reported slurs, an apology is required beyond past ones he has made of his own accord, Jepson wrote.

Rob Ford THE CANADIAN PRESS

"Mr. Ford has agreed to provide a comprehensive and specific apology to council, the public and the complainant" and takes full responsibility for his conduct, she wrote.

On March 17, 2012, in the presence of his staff, Ford called a taxi driver a "P---" and mocked the driver's language with "fake language sounds."

On March 5, 2014, Ford used more racial slurs.

That statement was captured on audio tape and later reported by the Toronto Star.

Ford responded promptly to the complaint, the integrity commissioner says, and accepted the underlying facts, including his statements.

Jepson found Ford's conduct was not just inappropriate but "abusive, harmful and agreed by society to be unacceptable" and contrary to the Ontario Human Rights Code that prohibits discrimination based on ancestry, colour and race.

Jepson said Ford's staff has told her that he has arranged to make a statement during the Tuesday-Wednesday council meeting and that the complainant is satisfied with such a public apology.

Ford, who is fighting potentially fatal cancer and expects to soon learn if he will have surgery to remove a tumour, did not return a call seeking comment.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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ENTERTAINMENT FOUR-LEGGED FRIENDS COMPLETE THEIR ODYSSEY The majestic horses of Cavalia Odysseo were settling into their new home in Toronto on Thursday after a relaxing two-week vacation in Kentucky. The famed artistic horse show returns to Toronto, new and improved, on April 8. Pictured is Drago giving a big chin hug to rider Emmy Love. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Community Environment Days also accept household hazardous waste. Community Environment Days run from April to October. Check schedule at toronto.ca/environment_days or call 311.

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TORONTO

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TOGETHER WE WILL

Homeless woman was loved

CRIME

Stone for Casey Smith found behind city building

Little is known about Casey Smith's life, but one thing is clear: She was loved.

"In memory of Casey Smith. Home isn't just where we live, it's where we love," reads an inscription professionally carved into a rectangular stone like those found in cemeteries.

It was discovered earlier this week in the melting snow behind Laura Dobson's apartment building at Queen St. W. and Roncesvalles Ave.

Dobson said she was horrified when she learned that Smith, a homeless Toronto woman and mother of five, who went by the street name Cockeye, was murdered in 2000 in a drug deal gone wrong.

She said she called 311 and was told that the stone was not city property.

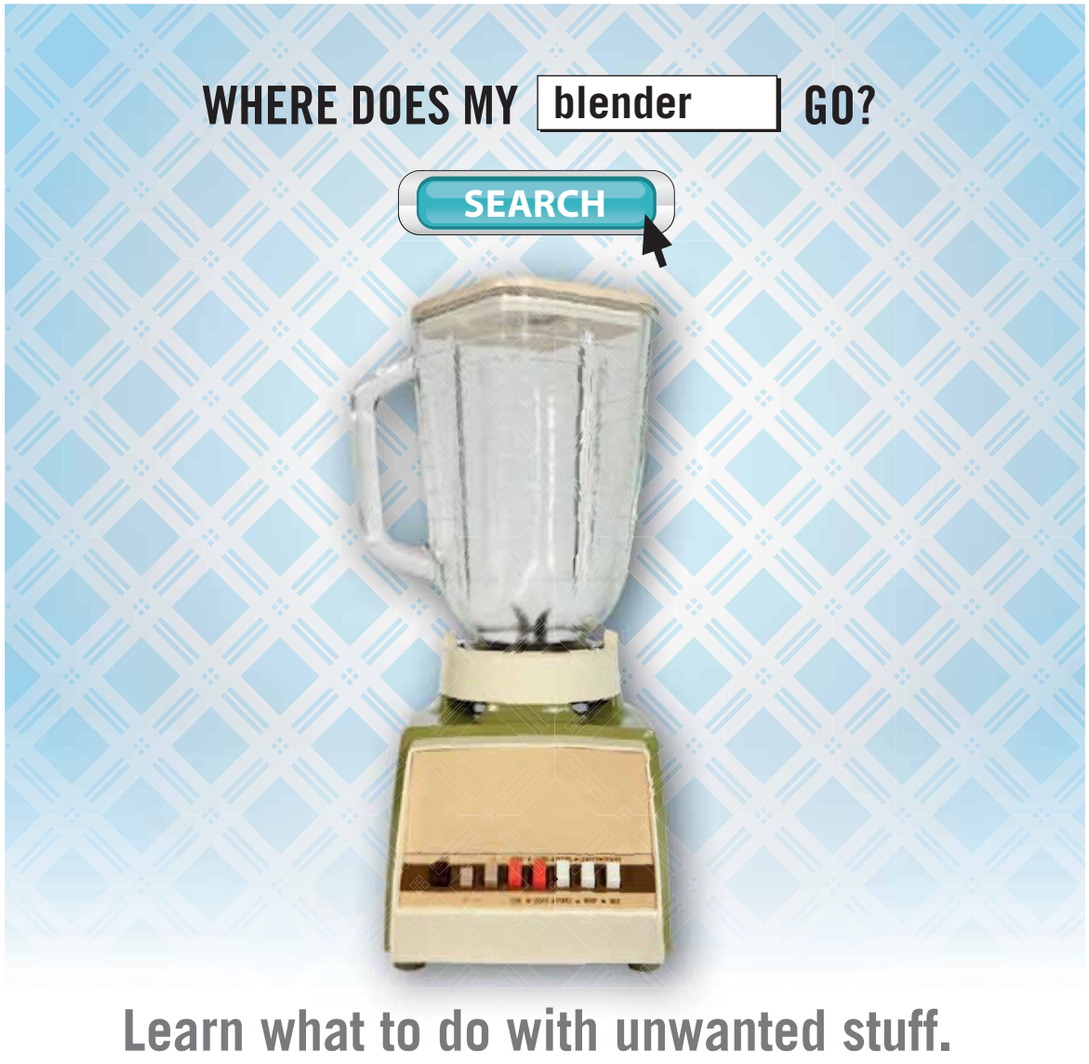
A passerby's picture from March 2008, posted on photo-sharing website Flickr, identifies the stone's home at that time as being somewhere on Queen Street West between Niagara Street and Palmerston Avenue.

Smith was murdered behind an apartment building in Moss Park (near Shuter and Parliament streets) and, according to a friend, she rented a room for a number of years in the Beaches. It's unknown if she was buried or cremated.

Brandi, who knew "Cockeye" for more than 10 years before she was killed, said she was pleasantly surprised to learn someone had commissioned the stone. "Wow, somebody really loved her," she said.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Parkdale resident Laura Dobson poses with a stone dedicated to the memory of Casey Smith that she found near garbage bins placed behind her building. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



CRIME

Woman gets 8 years over butt injections

A woman who pleaded guilty to illegally injecting silicone into the buttocks of nine women, acts that "wounded, maimed, disfigured" the women and endangered their lives, has been sentenced to eight years in prison.

Marilyn Reid, 50, was convicted of eight counts of aggravated assault in January.

There is no sentencing precedent for this case, observed Justice Jane Kelly in her sentencing decision.

As the decision was read, Reid sat with her head bowed. After credit for time served in pre-sentence custody, she has five years and three months left to serve.

Reid advertised online a butt enhancement procedure involving a substance known as PMMA, which is not authorized in Canada. The cost for the procedure was in the thousands of dollars.

However, that substance was not what was injected into the bodies of her clients — using a syringe and a caulking gun, Reid actually injected the women with silicone as they lay on beds in their homes or in hotel rooms.

The women could not assist their caregivers in saying what had been injected, resulting in it taking a long time for the women to be properly diagnosed and treated, Kelly said.

The offences, Kelly said, "appear to have been motivated by greed."

Reid lied that she had been a nurse or doctor in various other countries and even showed her own rear end to show the effectiveness and safety of the procedure.

> **"Ms. Reid has wounded, maimed, disfigured and endangered the lives of these women**
> Justice Jane Kelly

Reid did express remorse for her actions in court during her sentencing hearing, Kelly said. The court heard that she had a troubled childhood, suffered a broken leg at the hands of an ex-boyfriend who also took the proceeds of the cosmetic procedures, and is being treated in jail for depression.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Marilyn Reid.

BACKGROUND

Restricted procedures

Silicone should not be injected into the body because it cannot be removed if there is an adverse reaction, medical experts told the court. Only a doctor, a nurse under instruction from a doctor, and some pharmacists approved to administer the flu vaccine, are permitted to administer injections, Justice Jane Kelly said. The women injected suffered serious, potentially life-threatening infections and continue to suffer long-term effects.

CREDIT LINE

Sonya Barnett is holding a workshop for parents who want to know how to talk to their kids about sex in a time when they are bombarded with confusing sexual messages. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

How to talk to teens about sex

WORKSHOP

Talk with them, not at them, health educator says

Hookups, sexting, online porn pop-ups. Slut shaming, rape culture, Fifty Shades of Grey. Talking with teens about today's sexual landscape can be daunting. Especially for parents whose own first exposure to racy material was Dad's stack of Playboys back in the dark ages.

But in an era when kids are bombarded with confusing sexual messages, having those conversations is more important than ever, says Toronto sexual health educator Sonya Barnett.

The good news is it's never too late — or too early — to get started, says Barnett, 42, who has been talking candidly with her own 12-year-old son since he asked where babies come from at age 5.

Awkward? Well get over yourselves, she says.

Barnett will share her tips and arm parents with what they need to know at a three-hour workshop this Sunday called How to Talk About Sexuality to Your 21st Century Teen.

She'll lead parents through topics ranging from puberty, masturbation, contraception and safer sex to personal values, porn, online relationships, social media, consent and sexual orientation.

Barnett, also a co-founder of SlutWalk, a global movement to challenge derogatory victim-blaming language, spoke with Torstar News Service this week.

When should parents start talking about sex with kids?

As soon as they start asking. If a kid is old enough to ask, they're old enough to get an answer.

How do adults keep things age-appropriate?

It's about limiting the amount of information you give. You don't want to overburden them with too much and confuse them. Be very direct.

If parents didn't start discussing it early, how do they go about it with adolescents?

Casual conversation works best. Instead of sitting your teen down to have "a serious talk," do it while cooking dinner, eating a meal together, on errands. Work your way up to a topic instead of leading with a specific question, which may put your teen off. Questions about school or friends can move on to relationships.

Be curious. If you don't talk about other aspects of their lives, it will be harder to talk about sex.

Talk with them, not at them. It's best to teach decision-making skills, rather than saying "you can do this, but not that."

How can parents avoid framing answers with their own discomfort?

Prepare yourself for a question before it comes up. If you know (a certain aspect) is going to make you uncomfortable, figure out why. Was it the way you were brought up? Is it that you don't have the right answer? If you know that beforehand, you'll be better prepared.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

York Region willing to commit $60M more to subway expansion

York Region councillors say they are willing to commit an additional $60 million to the Toronto-York Spadina Subway extension into Vaughan, if it means the project can be up and running sooner than later.

"It is disappointing to us that this project has slipped off schedule and that it requires more budget funds," said York CAO Bruce Macgregor, who was co-chair of the executive task force overseeing the Spadina project.

He presented councillors with recommendations to move forward, including: supporting TTC CEO Andy Byford in his efforts to minimize delay and control costs, asking the federal and provincial governments for increased funding and approving an additional funding of $60 million. All were endorsed by council.

York Region is responsible for 40 per cent of the funding for the subway extension and has already committed $351.6 million dollars to the project. The region has also agreed to a "capacity buy-in" of $30 million to the TTC to cover costs of infrastructure upgrades to Downsview station.

The funds will likely come from development charges, and the rest will come through a tax levy, said regional treasurer Bill Hughes. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Condo towers to host city's arts scene

DEVELOPMENT

Waterfront announcement hailed as vote of confidence

Another piece of Toronto's waterfront puzzle has fallen into place with the announcement Thursday that Daniels Corp. plans to build an arts-focused condo, office and retail development in the burgeoning East Bayfront area.

The $700-million, 1.3-million-square-foot complex will feature one 48-storey tower with more than 900 condos as well as a second condo tower 38 storeys tall. There will also be a 13-storey and a 10-storey office tower.

Mayor John Tory was at the announcement Thursday, made in a tent on the easterly edge of the demolition site at Queens Quay and Lower Jarvis, former home of the Guvernment and Kool Haus nightclubs.

Key to the project will be what Daniels Corp. hopes will be a "cultural accelerator" — a 150,000-square-foot Creative Industries Hub that will be home to the non-profit arts-development organization Artscape Toronto and other arts and entertainment businesses.

The project will also include an arts-focused, post-secondary institution at the base of the condo towers, meant to build on the creative energy across the street in George Brown College's waterfront campus.

It's another important vote of confidence from the private sector for Waterfront Toronto's vision for the Queens Quay area, said John Campbell, president and CEO of Waterfront Toronto.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Mayor John Tory, centre, with Tom Dutton, left, and Mitchell Cohen, both of Daniels Corp., at the launch. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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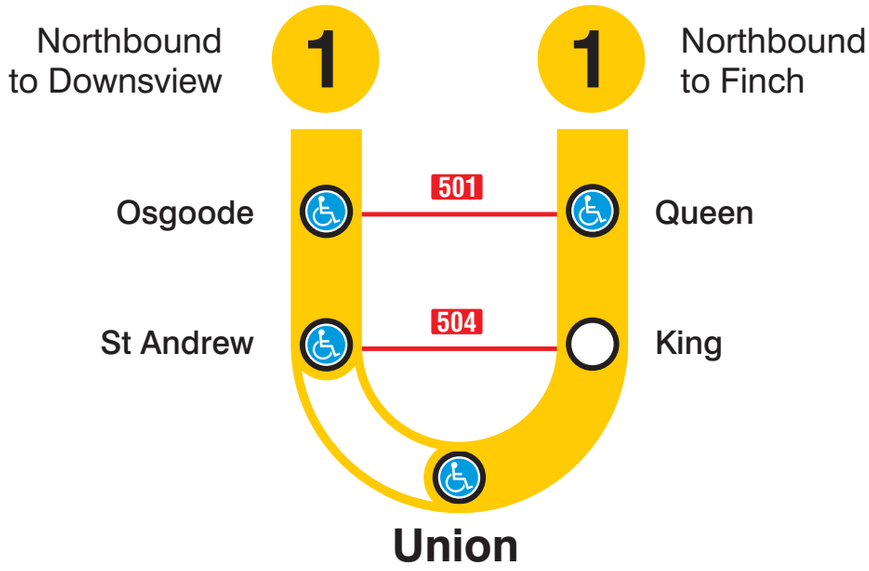

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TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

LABOUR

Police offered salary hike of 8.35 per cent

Members of the Toronto Police Association (TPA) are being asked to ratify a new contract that includes an 8.35 per cent salary increase over four years, Torstar News Service has learned.

The proposed wage hike will increase salaries by 2.75 per cent this year, followed by 1.95 next year and 1.9 and 1.75 per cent in the final two years of the new deal.

The tentative deal — reached last week between the union and the Toronto Police Services Board — also eliminates a long-standing perk for new recruits that has allowed police employees to bank up to 18 sick days a year.

Mike McCormack.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The service pays out about $12 million annually in unused sick leave to employees who quit or retire.

"That has been in dispute for a long time and will result in big savings in the long run," said a police source.

The deal, if ratified, will also increase the amount of time it takes to reach the status of first-class constable, with a base pay of $90,000.

Members will vote on the tentative contract using mail-in balloting over the next few weeks.

TPA president Mike McCormack and board members unveiled details of the deal to members at a meeting Thursday night in an east-end hotel.

Leaving the venue, he declined to comment except to repeat his earlier assertion last week that the deal is fair to employees and the city.

In 2011, the service's officers were awarded an 11.4 per cent raise over four years. The last contract expired Dec. 31.

This year's city budget didn't include the impact of the salary settlement, though city staff said an estimated provision was built into it.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

IN BRIEF

Hamilton murder suspect surrenders in Toronto

Police say a 38-year-old man is facing a murder charge in the death of a woman in Hamilton.

They said Renee Neganiwina, 26, died of her injuries after being found in the bedroom of a Hamilton home following a fire on Wednesday. Investigators say Joseph Snelgrove surrendered himself to Toronto police on Thursday. He was returned to Hamilton, where he was charged with second-degree murder.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Average hydro rates to increase by $137 per year

Electricity bills for most Ontario households will increase an average of $137 next year because of changes to Liberal government programs.

The 10 per cent rebate on hydro bills — the clean-energy benefit averaging $17 a month — will end on Jan. 1. At the same time, the debt retirement charge of roughly $5.60 a month, used to pay off old nuclear program costs, will also come off bills.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Health Minister Eric Hoskins wants medical regulatory bodies to ban 'abhorrent' gay conversion therapy TORONTO STAR/DAVE CHIDLEY

Plan to ban conversion therapy

PATIENT SUICIDE CONCERN

Health Minister will ask medical bodies to end treatment

Under pressure from an NDP bill to ban "conversion therapy," Health Minister Eric Hoskins says he will ask medical regulatory bodies to prohibit what he calls the "abhorrent" treatments.

"This is not something this government would ever support or endorse," Hoskins said in the legislature Thursday.

New Democrat MPP Cheri Di Novo introduced her bill earlier this month, saying some physicians and therapists who believe being gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans is a form of mental illness and intend to turn patients straight — often at the insistence of parents and with religious overtones.

Some have become suicidal or killed themselves in anguish, Di Novo told reporters, saying Hoskins' approach does not go far enough and said conversion therapy should be banned for anyone 18 and under and not covered by OHIP for anyone over 18. "We need far more from this government ... we need the government to stand up here on behalf of victims. We're talking about suicide."

Di Novo initially put her question to Premier Kathleen Wynne, the province's first openly gay premier, who declined to answer and turned the issue over to her health minister. Hoskins, himself a doctor, said he will approach the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and similar bodies regulating psychologists "to explore amending the regulations to ban this practice, as it should be banned."

"This isn't treatment. Our Ontario Human Rights Code is very specific on issues such as this," added Hoskins, who said such treatments fall under existing prohibitions against professional misconduct. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

ALEXANDER LISI TRIAL

Undercover cop unaware of Ford probe

An undercover cop purchased marijuana ostensibly supplied by Alexander (Sandro) Lisi, a friend of Rob Ford's, but was unaware Lisi was part of an extraordinary investigation into the former mayor's "crack video," an Ontario court heard Thursday.

Under cross-examination, Det. Ross Fernandes said he had never seen anything like the surveillance aircraft, secret pole cameras and other tactics police used to investigate Ford in 2013 amid reports of a video showing him apparently smoking crack cocaine.

Instead, Fernandes said, his "target" was Jamshid (Jay) Bahrami, owner of a west-end dry cleaners, and later Lisi, who was Ford's pal and sometime driver and bodyguard.

In hours of intercepts played for the court, Fernandes presses Bahrami to hook him up with Lisi for a drug deal. Lisi, however, feeling the heat from the "crack video" probe, was keeping a low profile.

Finally, on Oct. 1, 2013, Bahrami told Fernandes, who is no longer an undercover agent, to come by to pick up "some shirts" apparently dropped off by Lisi.

Fernandes, under drug-squad orders to make no arrests, heads to the store and buys about 115 grams of marijuana.

But Lisi refuses to show his face as Fernandes wants.

"The heat's on him," Bahrami explains to Fernandes. "He's getting psycho."

Before leaving with the drugs, Fernandes asks Bahrami how much Lisi can supply in the future. "Any amount you want," the store owner responds. The trial continues Friday with further cross-examination of Fernandes and the officer who arrested Lisi. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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TTC drug and alcohol testing program on hold

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Union has fought efforts to randomly test employees

More than three years after the TTC board approved random drug and alcohol testing for its employees, the program is on hold pending the outcome of arbitration with the TTC's largest union.

The TTC says it will likely be another two or three years before an arbitrator rules on the practice, which the union argues is invasive, costly and ineffective.

Random testing was approved by the TTC board in 2011 as an add-on to an already existing "fitness for duty" policy that introduced some drug testing in 2010. But it was confined to pre-employment screening and employee testing where there was "reasonable cause" or following an incident.

The idea of random testing came up following an Aug. 2011 incident in which a TTC rider was killed in a bus crash. The bus driver was charged with negligence and possession of cannabis but was not found to be impaired.

Between 2010 and 2014, testing for reasonable cause has turned up seven positive results. Seven other employees, who refused to be tested, are considered to have had a positive result under the TTC policy.

TTC head Andy Byford said there have been relatively few problems with drugs, when the number of employees is considered. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Five TTC workers also tested positive for drugs following on-the-job incidents. Four have refused.

Workers who have been treated for alcohol and drug issues are also subject to testing. Twenty-three have tested positive in that category.

TTC CEO Andy Byford said the post-incident testing has turned up "very few instances when you consider how many employees we have and how many miles they cover."

"Even if we were to insist on random testing, the union would almost certainly instruct the members not to participate," he said.

Byford said he's worked in other transit agencies around the world where drug and alcohol testing is standard. It is also widely used in the U.S.

"A responsible transit authority should always take whatever measures are available to make sure there is no question of its employees in a safety-critical position being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. I would include random testing in that," he said.

Amalgamated Transit Union president Bob Kinnear said he went to meet a driver at the hospital following a crash and found the employee so shaken he didn't even realize why his mouth was being swabbed. That driver was later cleared of any wrongdoing in the incident, he said.

> **We know within our industry drug and alcohol consumption is not the main concern. It is sleep deprivation.**
> Amalgamated Transit Union president Bob Kinnear

He also said the TTC wasn't properly reflecting the costs of the testing. By the time supervisors are called to incident locations in the dead of the night, the cost of $60 or $70 per test isn't accurate.

"We know within our industry drug and alcohol consumption is not the main concern. It is sleep deprivation. They should be looking at other measures to ensure through scheduling, operators get the rest they need to operate a vehicle safely," he said.

Kinnear said the union has spent about $800,000 challenging the policy. He suggested that the TTC's costs would be significantly higher.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

UNION

Postal workers deem flyer 'hate mail'

Canada Post workers are up in arms after they say they were forced to deliver a "hateful" flyer to some 4,500 homes in Toronto's Beaches-East York neighbourhood.

The newsletter, titled Your Ward News, features images of Premier Kathleen Wynne dressed up as Chairman Mao, questions the science behind vaccines and refers to former prime minister Pierre Trudeau as a "rabid anti-Semite who admired Hitler."

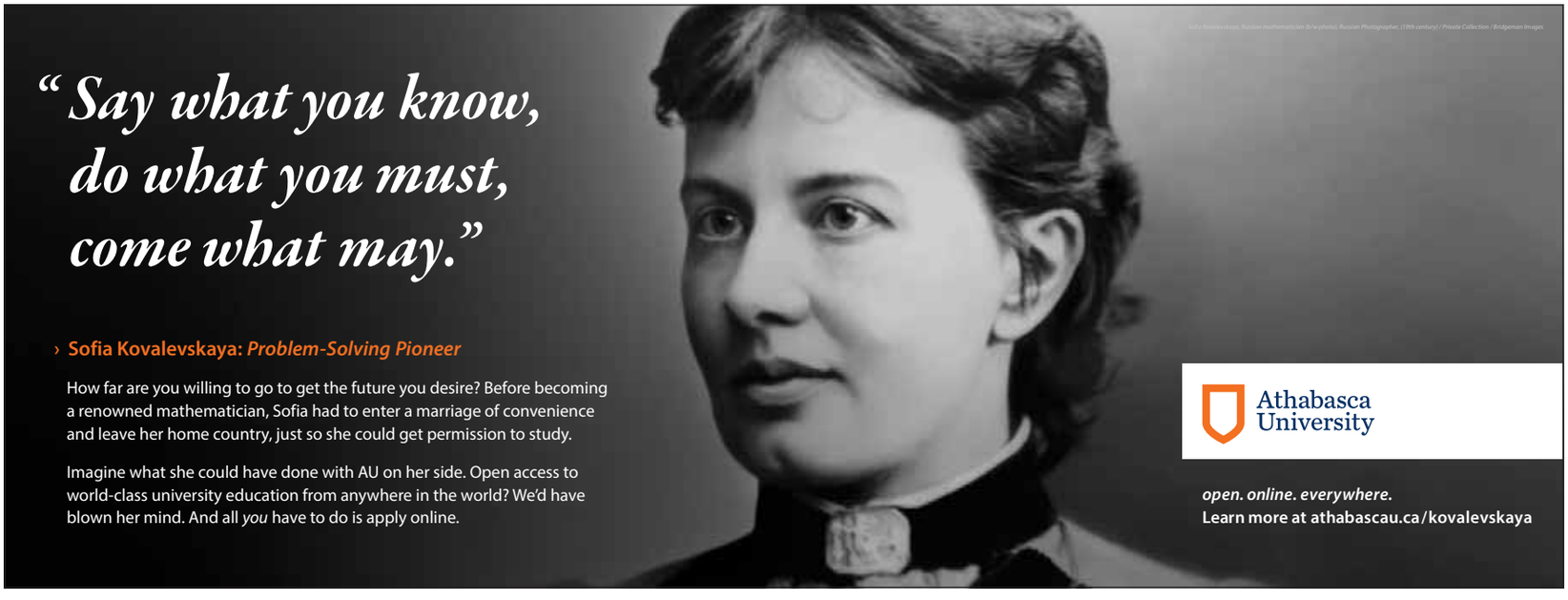
"We started getting calls from carriers as soon as it showed up," said Mark Brown with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

The flyer was produced by James Sears, who made headlines last year when he ran unsuccessfully for city council in Ward 32. His campaign website featured an animation of Vladimir Putin spanking incumbent Coun. Mary-Margaret McMahon.

While "hundreds" of mail carriers complained about Sears' flyer, Brown said, Canada Post threatened to discipline anyone who failed to deliver the newsletter.

"We do not have the right to refuse a mail item because we or our employees object to its content," Canada Post spokesperson Jon Hamilton said in an email. "Anyone who has concerns about the content should either contact the publisher or simply dispose of it."

Brown wants Canada Post to investigate the flyer more carefully to see if it violates hate speech laws. LUKE SIMCOE/METRO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MPs told ISIL mission will need more time: Sources

IRAQ AND SYRIA

Military official said only 650 Kurds have been trained

The training of Kurdish peshmerga fighters has been a slow undertaking that could mean Canada's mission in Iraq and Syria will take more than a year, The Canadian Press has learned.

That was the message officials from the Canadian Forces and Foreign Affairs delivered behind closed doors Wednesday to the main critics of the New Democrats and the Liberals.

The briefing included an officer who currently oversees the strategic joint staff, the military's nerve centre. Neither Defence Minister Jason Kenney nor Foreign Affairs Minister Rob Nicholson were present.

Maj.-Gen. Mike Hood, who will soon become the commander of the air force, told the briefing that only 650 peshmerga fighters have been trained since a contingent of 69 elite Canadian commandos deployed to northern Iraq last September, according to multiple sources with knowledge of what was said in the room.

The MPs were told that "this was not a one-year undertaking by any stretch of the imagination, that it will take multiple years," said one source, who insisted on anonymity.

Hood tried to reassure the politicians that CF-18 jet fighters would be able to conduct precision strikes on moving and static targets inside Syria — one objective of a controversial motion by the Harper government.

Sources said Hood told those gathered that the Canadians would get accurate strike information from intelligence and surveillance platforms but did not say how the intelligence would be gathered.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Defence Minister Jason Kenney speaks with the media Wednesday in the foyer of the House of Commons. The training of Kurdish fighters has been slow, which could mean Canada's mission in Iraq may take more than a year, according to sources. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

ANTI-TERROR BILL

Ex-spymaster says activists need not fret

Many demonstrators are flattering themselves when they publicly fret about coming under the scrutiny of security services, says a former spymaster.

Ray Boisvert said Thursday the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) had the resources to monitor only those threats "in the red, high-risk, high-probability zone" when he served as the agency's assistant director of intelligence earlier this decade.

"That meant that we had no time to even consider looking at any sort of lesser evils that were emerging out there," Boisvert told the House of Commons public-safety committee, which is studying a sweeping new security bill.

Boisvert, now a security consultant, said he takes "great offence" to commonly voiced concerns that the legislation would effectively place legitimate protest under the CSIS lens, adding that groups and individuals "should not flatter yourself to that degree."

Boisvert and David Harris, another retired CSIS officer, backed a legislative proposal to allow the spy agency to actively derail terror plots — not just gather information about them.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

DEFENCE

Budget watchdog says military costs unsustainable

The Harper government has built a military that it cannot afford and will be forced to make tough choices in the future, the country's budget watchdog said Thursday.

The new assessment by the parliamentary budget office came as debate kicked off in the House of Commons about an expanded and extended war against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

Jean-Denis Frechette, the parliamentary budget officer, says the federal government will need to either pour more money into its defence budget, scale back its ambitions or do a mixture of both.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Most free MP trips to Taiwan, Israel

POLITICS

Commissioner releases MP travel arranged by outside orgs

Sixty MPs declared 86 free trips — courtesy of advocacy organizations, business groups and foreign embassies — worth a total of $442,524 last year, according to a summary of sponsored travel reports released Thursday by Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner Mary Dawson.

The most popular destinations for travel junkets in 2014 were Taiwan, which received 17 visits, and Israel, which was frequented 12 times.

MPs are required to disclose travel worth more than $500 — and paid for by someone other than the federal government, political parties, interparliamentary associations or the MPs themselves — to the commissioner within 60 days.

NDP leader Thomas Mulcair travelled to Las Vegas to speak at a labour conference. He was among 60 MPs who took trips sponsored by groups outside the Canadian government.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair travelled to Las Vegas with his executive assistant George Smith to speak at the convention for the United Steelworkers International, from Aug. 11 to 12, 2014. The union covered $2,915 in travel costs.

Liberal MP Irwin Cotler travelled to Israel to address a counterterrorism conference in Herzliya from Sept. 4 to 12, 2014. The university IDC Herzliya covered $5,219 in travel costs.

NDP MP Paul Dewar attended the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons from Dec. 6 to 9, 2014. The Friedrich-Ebert Foundation covered $2,105 in travel costs.

Liberal MP Stéphane Dion travelled to Spain, visiting Barcelona, Madrid and Tarragona, to participate on multiple panels at a conference from Mar. 8 to 13, 2014. La Fundacion Canada and Federalistes d'Esquerres covered $2,947 in travel costs.

Conservative MP James Rajotte travelled to Ghana "to experience realities, opportunities and challenges" in the country from July 14 to 24, 2014. Engineers Without Borders Canada covered $3,629 in travel costs.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES

QUEBEC REGISTRY

Supreme Court to rule on gun data

The Harper government may be headed for another political collision with the Supreme Court of Canada, which is set to rule Friday on the fate of Quebec's gun registry data.

The Conservatives abolished the registry for long guns in February 2011, fulfilling a five-year-old campaign promise after forming a majority government.

They also ordered that all data collected by the provinces be destroyed — a decision the Quebec government went to court to overturn.

A Quebec judge originally granted the province's request to preserve the data, calling it a constitutional infringement to destroy it. But that decision was overturned by the Quebec Court of Appeal, which said there was no constitutional violation in the federal order to destroy the data.

Jeremy Laurin, a spokesman for Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney, defended the government's decision to seek to have the gun registry data destroyed.

"It would be dangerous for our law enforcement to rely on outdated and obsolete information to conduct their operations," Laurin said in a statement.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Stop Alberta premier from early election: Lawyer

An Edmonton lawyer is seeking a court order to prevent Alberta Premier Jim Prentice from calling an early provincial election.

Tom Engel wants a judge to declare that the next vote must be held between March 1, 2016, and May 31, 2016.

That time period is spelled out in Alberta's Election Act introduced by the Progressive Conservatives and passed by the legislature in 2011.

Engel says as a taxpayer and a voter he expects the government to live up to the law and he hopes the court will hear his application.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Co-pilot locked cockpit, crashed plane on purpose

Investigators carry boxes from the apartment of Germanwings airliner jet co-pilot Andreas Lubitz, in Duesseldorf, Germany, Thursday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FLIGHT 9525

Some airlines get stricter on cockpit rules

Passengers with moments to live screamed in terror and the pilot frantically pounded on the locked cockpit door as a 27-year-old German co-pilot deliberately and wordlessly smashed an Airbus carrying 150 people into an Alpine mountainside.

The account Thursday of the final moments of Germanwings Flight 9525 prompted some airlines to immediately impose stricter cockpit rules — and raised haunting questions about the motive of the co-pilot, whose breathing never wavered as he destroyed the plane and the lives of those aboard.

"We have no idea of the reason," Marseille Prosecutor Brice Robin said, revealing the chilling conclusions investigators reached after reconstructing the final minutes of the flight from the plane's black box voice recorder. Co-pilot Andreas Lubitz's intention was "to destroy this plane."

French, German and U.S. officials said there was no indication of terrorism. The prosecutor did not elaborate on why investigators do not suspect a political motive; instead they're focusing on the co-pilot's "personal, family and professional environment" to try to determine why he did it.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, whose nation lost 75 people on the flight, said the conclusions brought the tragedy to a "new, simply incomprehensible dimension." Devastated families of victims visited the crash scene Thursday, looking across a windy mountain meadow toward where their loved ones died.

The Airbus A320 was flying from Barcelona to Duesseldorf on Tuesday when it lost radio contact with air traffic controllers and began plunging from its cruising altitude of 38,000 feet, before slamming into the mountainside eight minutes later.

The prosecutor laid out in horrifying detail the final sounds heard in the cockpit extracted from the mangled voice recorder.

Lubitz, courteous in the first part of the trip, became "curt" when the captain began the mid-flight briefing on the planned landing, Robin said.

The pilot, who has not been identified, left the cockpit for an apparent bathroom break, and Lubitz took control of the jet.

He suddenly started a manual descent, and the pilot started knocking on the door.

There was no response. "It was absolute silence in the cockpit," the prosecutor said — except for the steady breathing he said indicated Lubitz was not panicked, and acted in a calm, deliberate manner.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A building burns after an explosion on Second Avenue on Thursday in New York City. ANDREW BURTON/GETTY IMAGES

NEW YORK CITY

Fire, building collapse injures two critically

A building on fire near New York University collapsed on Thursday, and at least two people were critically injured, firefighters said.

Orange flames and black smoke billowed from the facade and roof of the five-storey building in Manhattan, near several NYU buildings and the Washington Square Park area. Flames were spreading to other buildings.

Investigators were looking into whether there had been a gas leak. There were some reports of an explosion before the fire. The area was being evacuated, and other people were being evaluated at the scene.

Freelance photographer Michael Seto, who lives about 1-1/2 blocks away, said he was having lunch around 3:20 p.m.

"I could feel the boom in my apartment, and it short of shook," he said.

He grabbed his camera, ran outside and found a crowd gathering, looking at a brick tenement-style building with a restaurant on the first floor.

"By the second story, the front part of the building, the facade, the first and second stories, it looked like, had collapsed into the street," he said.

Rubble was on the sidewalk, and glass and debris had been flung across an avenue.

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Shiite rebels, known as Houthis, protest against Saudi-led airstrikes during a rally in Sanaa, Yemen.
HANI MOHAMMED/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Saudis, allies plan invasion of Yemen

MIDDLE EAST

Houthi leader defiant under airstrikes

The turmoil in Yemen grew into a regional conflict Thursday, with Saudi Arabia and its allies bombing Shiite rebels allied with Iran, while Egyptian officials said a ground assault will follow the airstrikes.

Iran denounced the Saudi-led air campaign, saying it "considers this action a dangerous step." Oil prices jumped in New York and London after the offensive.

The military action turned impoverished and chaotic Yemen into a new front in the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Starting before dawn, Saudi warplanes pounded an air base, military bases and anti-aircraft positions in the capital of Sanaa and flattened a number of homes near the airport, killing at least 18 civilians, including six children. Another round followed in the evening, again rocking the city.

Rebel leader Abdul-Malik al-Houthi angrily accused the United States, Saudi Arabia and Israel of launching a "criminal, unjust, brutal and sinful" campaign aimed at invading and occupying Yemen.

> **"Yemenis won't accept such humiliation.**
> Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, leader of the Houthi Yemeni shiite rebels

The Houthis, who have taken over much of the country, mobilized thousands of supporters to protest the airstrikes, with one speaker lashing out at the Saudi-led coalition and warning that Yemen "will be the tomb" of the aggressors.

White House spokesman Eric Schultz told reporters on Air Force One en route to Alabama that President Barack Obama had authorized logistical and intelligence support for the strikes, but that the U.S. is not joining with direct military action.

In the air assault codenamed "Operation Decisive Storm," Saudi Arabia deployed some 100 fighter jets, 150,000 soldiers and other navy units, Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya TV reported.

Also involved were aircraft from the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan, Morocco, Sudan and Egypt, though it was not clear which carried out actual strikes.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ISRAEL

Gazans committed war crimes: Amnesty

The human rights group Amnesty International said in a report Thursday that Palestinian militants committed war crimes during the 2014 Gaza conflict by killing both Israeli and Palestinian civilians using indiscriminate projectiles.

The report comes after two other reports issued in late 2014 that accused Israel of war crimes for attacks on multistory civilian buildings and Palestinian homes during the war.

The 50-day Gaza war left more than 2,100 Palestinians dead, mostly civilians, according to Palestinian and U.N. officials. On the Israeli side, 66 soldiers and six civilians were killed.

Palestinian militants, including the armed wing of Hamas, launched unguided rockets and mortars from civilian areas toward other civilian areas, a breach of international law, the human rights group said.

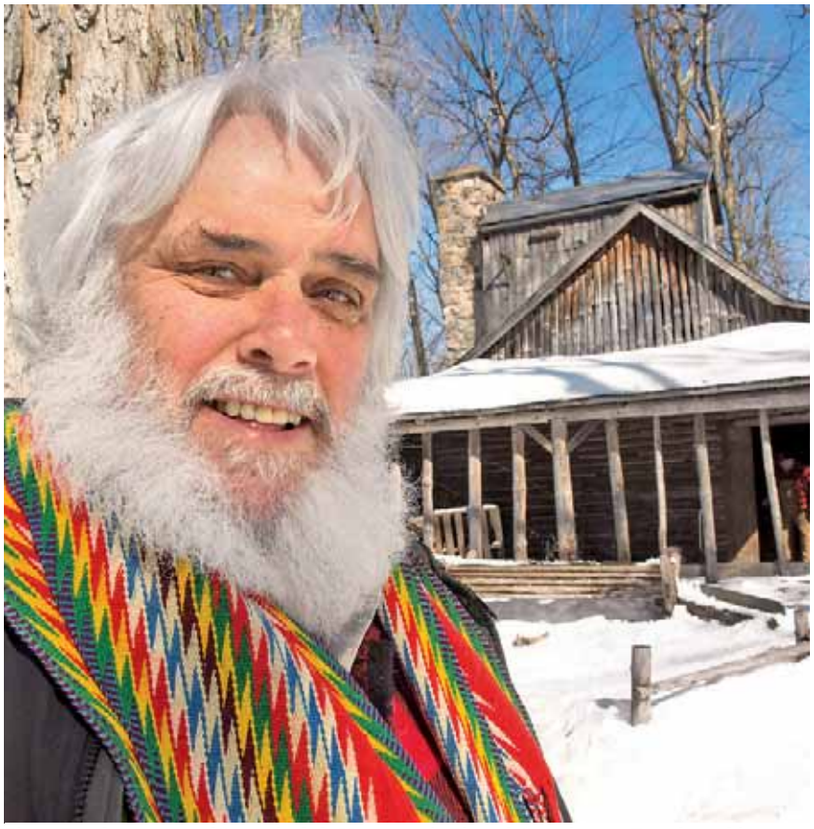
Six civilians in Israel were killed in such attacks, and 13 Palestinian civilians were killed when a Palestinian projectile apparently landed in a Gaza refugee camp.

Palestinians have claimed that the Israeli military was responsible for that attack, but Amnesty International said an independent munitions expert examining the evidence on the group's behalf concluded that a Palestinian rocket was responsible.

The report also alleged other international humanitarian law violations during the conflict, including Palestinian militant groups' storing munitions in civilian buildings and United Nations schools, and launching attacks near locations where hundreds of displaced civilians were taking shelter.

"The devastating impact of Israeli attacks on Palestinian civilians during the conflict is undeniable, but violations by one side in a conflict can never justify violations by their opponents," said Philip Luther of Amnesty International.

Hamas official Taher al-Nounou denied the allegations in the Amnesty report, saying it relied on the Israeli narrative. He said Hamas did not target civilians.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Pierre Faucher, owner of Sucrerie de la Montagne in Rigaud, Que., is seen Tuesday at his sugar shack, where he boils the sap over a wood fire. PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Long winter slows maple business

SEASONAL INDUSTRIES

Producers need warmer weather to get the sap flowing

Just like any other crop, maple syrup is at the mercy of Mother Nature, and the frigid winter hasn't been kind to Canadian sugar bush owners.

Many producers, like Ray Bonenberg of Mapleside Sugar Bush south of Pembroke, Ont., are keeping a close eye on the thermometer and anxiously waiting for a stretch of warmer days to get the sap flowing.

"I've been tapping all day, drilling holes and tapping, and it's running on the south side of the tree but not on the north side of the tree. It's too cold," said Bonenberg, who is also president of the Ontario Maple Syrup Producers Association.

But he is unfazed, because last season was also late due to the cold temperatures.

Production can vary widely from north to south. A few producers in the Sault Ste. Marie area boiled until May 1 last year, while those south of Highway 7 in Ontario were finished by the second week of April.

Quebec is experiencing a similar situation to Ontario this season, according to Caroline Cyr of the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers.

"In general, the season is late," she said, adding that she expects it to begin in earnest by the end of March.

Pierre Faucher, owner of Sucrerie de la Montagne in Rigaud, Que., was jubilant this week as sap started dripping into his 3,500 buckets. He's not letting the delay get to him. After all, says Faucher, you can't control Mother Nature.

"Nature doesn't have a watch," Faucher said from his operation west of Montreal. A combination of nights below freezing and days above freezing is needed to get the sap flowing in sugar maple trees.

Faucher and four others gather sap by hand and boil it over a wood fire in a sugar shack. It takes about 40 litres of maple sap to make one litre of maple syrup. "Normal people have pipelines and pumps and stuff, but I wanted to keep it traditional," he said.

Deep snow in the Maritimes has meant producers have had to do some digging to uncover their lines. But sap flow a few weeks behind schedule was buying them time to get their trees tapped. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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KEEPING LARGE PROJECTS ON TIME, ON BUDGET IS TTC'S GOAL

ANDY BYFORD
CEO
TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

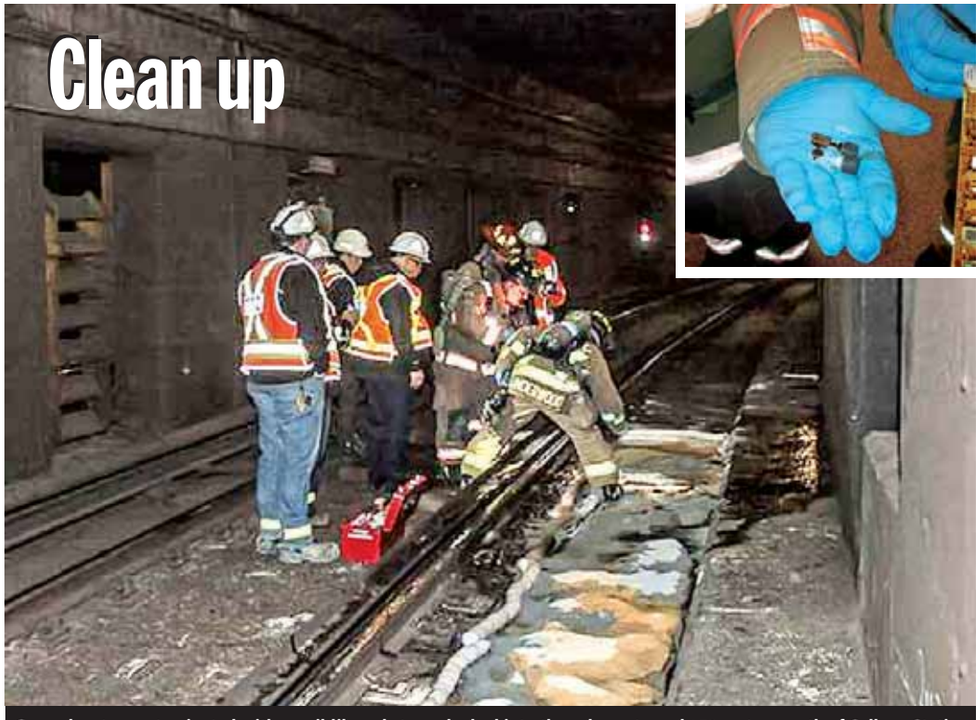
A challenging element of our mission to modernize the TTC is to deliver projects for which critical decisions were made some years ago, but that now require us to make difficult choices.

The problems facing the subway extension of Line 1 to York University and up into York Region have been well documented in recent days. The TTC faced criticism when it had to announce a further delay to the opening date and a request for increased funding.

Such criticism is justified, of course, as we are rightly expected to deliver projects on time and on budget. Our Five-Year Corporate Plan references the need to deliver on our promises and to hold ourselves publicly accountable when we don't. There are many reasons why this project is facing the challenges it is. Eighteen months was lost due to difficulties in finalizing funding; that time was not added to the construction schedule. Other contributory factors include a fatal accident at the future York University station site, problems with utility relocation, strained contractor relationships, and two very harsh winters that led to significant slowdowns at some construction sites.

My management team and I are accountable for this project and, while lessons must be learned, it is down to us to finish the job. Another challenging TTC project relates to the ongoing signal replacement of Line 1 and the introduction of Automatic Train Control. ATC, as it's called, will increase line capacity by allowing us to run more trains with shorter spacing between them, which will mean less waiting and less crowding for you. When this project was initiated seven years ago, it was structured around a series of highly complex contractual and technical interfaces – not an industry best practice. We have since simplified this project and how it is to be delivered, while maintaining the benefits of ATC and keeping the project on time and within budget. Going forward, my view is that the TTC should increasingly focus on its core job of moving people from A to B. That is what we do best and our five-year plan will get our service quality back to what it once was – the jewel in the crown of North American transit.

Clean up



Ground water contaminated with an oil-like substance leaked into the subway tunnel 150 metres north of College Station starting late Monday night. On Tuesday morning, Toronto Fire deemed the area safe to begin repairs and cleanup. By 1:30 p.m., subway service resumed. The source of the ground water and contaminates remains under investigation.

EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Name: Tony Precopi
Position: Pneumatic Analyzer
Years of Service: 34

Being a Pneumatic Analyzer with an aging streetcar fleet, limited parts supplies, and the variable weather in Toronto, my job can be very challenging. Making repairs to the streetcars may require modifications and sometimes some old fashioned ingenuity. When my job is complete, I find it very rewarding and satisfying to know that I've been able to overcome these obstacles and release streetcars safely back into service.

Weekly Customer Service Report Week ending March 25, 2015	Actual % Target %	
Subway Deliver a punctual service	96%* 97%	✗
Bus Deliver reliable headway	68% 65%	✓
Streetcar Deliver reliable headway	65% 70%	✗

*Environmental spill on March 24

SPADINA AND COLLEGE TRACK WORK APRIL 6-27

The TTC and the City of Toronto will be replacing streetcar tracks and switches, as well as improving the road and sidewalks at the intersection of Spadina Ave. and College St. from April 6 to 27. Beginning Sunday, March 29, replacement buses that operate on the 504 King route will be moved to Spadina. Streetcars that normally operate on Spadina will be moved to the 504 King route. On April 6, the 506/306 Carlton streetcar and 510 Spadina replacement buses will be required to divert. For route details, visit ttc.ca.

WEEKEND LINE 1 CLOSURE – UNION TO ST ANDREW

This Saturday and Sunday, Line 1 will be closed between Union and St Andrew stations for scheduled station upgrades. Visit ttc.ca for details.

ABOUT REPLACEMENT BUSES

During rush hour, most of our bus fleet is in service, with the rest undergoing routine maintenance. During an emergency subway closure, like the one on Tuesday, replacement buses are "borrowed" from frequently served routes throughout the city. Replacing a subway service that carries 25,000 people per hour during morning peak with buses that carry an average of 60 people is impossible. On Tuesday, 70 replacement buses were used. While the TTC works hard to get you moving during an emergency, replacement buses become crowded, resulting in a longer wait, so it is important to consider alternative routes for your journey.

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FIND OUT MORE:
Visit ttc.ca for details about routes, schedules and planned construction.
Facebook.com/TTCnotices
Youtube.com/OfficialTTCchannel

TCONNECT WI-FI:
Free Wi-Fi is now available at select TTC subway stations. Visit tconnect.ca or ttc.ca for details.

metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
WEEKEND March 27-29, 2015

Strange love

THE KOHLER REPORT

Rebecca Kohler

I used to think online dating was an inorganic and awkward way to meet people.

"Hello, my computer says we might get along, would you like to eat pho together?"

And maybe it is a little weird, but on second thought, the new-ish phenomenon of apps such as Tinder and OkCupid look totally natural when compared to the age-old art form of matchmaking.

Two B.C. women are asking for their money back after paying a matchmaking service, LifeMates Canada, thousands of dollars to find them Mr. Right ... or at least Mr. Pretty Good. Both women claim that LifeMates set them up on dates with men that came nowhere near to what they'd asked for.

While I feel for the women involved, I don't think they should get their money back because in the words of the Beatles: Can't Buy Me Love.

I hated the movie Inception; I have other friends who thought it was a masterpiece. I think John Fluevog shoes are an affront to the feet they're worn on; I have a friend who won't wear any other brand. If movies and shoes are subjective, why would anyone think we could agree on who's lovable?

I went on a blind date once. My friends told me the guy was tall, dark and cute. I pictured Tom Cruise (on stilts). When I got to the date, my heart sank. The guy wasn't ugly — he was attractive — but he wasn't what I had pictured and he wasn't my type. What is my type? Ha! I wouldn't be able to tell you until I saw it and even then I probably wouldn't be able to pinpoint what it was about that person that caught my eye.

This isn't only about looks. A man who's "funny" to some, might be a Yakov Smirnoff to others. Maybe he's a "great cook," but he cooks vegan and you like steak. There are a million reasons why a good quality on paper might not live up to itself in real life. And what about pheromones and body language and fashion choices? Your date might be nice and cute and smart, but you're too distracted by the socks-and-sandals look to notice.

I've dated online and yes, there were (many) times I was disappointed in that scenario, too. Maybe the guy didn't look like his photo or his funny email banter translated to awkward real-life conversation. One guy kept making racist jokes while another somehow had me paying for everything (actually, I think that was the same guy). But on my way home from those dates, at least I knew *I* had chosen those men.

I had no one to blame for the losers I was dating but myself.

Matchmakers are middlemen while online dating services basically act as a directory of "who's single." You peruse, you choose. Compared to Lifemates Canada, OkCupid looks as natural as a drug-free birth.

If I can't trust the people who know me best to buy me a sweater I like for Christmas, why would anyone trust a stranger to find them love?

Rebecca Kohler is a standup comic, writer, actor, gymnast, lawyer and chemist. (Some of this isn't true.) Follow her on Twitter at @becca_kohler

Happy face/Sad face

From **naked neighbours** to **cat lady whisperers,**
Metro weighs in on the news that made headlines this week:

Grin and bare it

People in Charlotte, N.C., will not get a reprieve from the sight of their neighbour standing buck naked by his doorway several times a week. Police say that while the local law prohibits being nude in places the public has access to, there's nothing that can be done in this case. Maybe it's time for the local residents association to take matters into their own hands and strategically plant some shrubbery in front of naked dude's yard.

Beginning of the end (fingers crossed)

In what's been heralded as an important step in eliminating the virus for good, researchers "deleted" HIV from human DNA. The scientists used a DNA-snipping enzyme to cut out the virus, and then the cell's repair machinery took over, fusing the cell back together. And as if this isn't excellent enough, the process potentially could be applied to many other diseases. Not bad scientists, not bad.

Hey kitty kitty kitty

Hey guys, can we drop the crazy cat-lady trope already? Beth-Ann Colebourne delighted the Internet this week when she posted a video to YouTube of a lynx she spotted outside her northern Ontario shop. But then a bunch of meanies questioned her sanity because she says things in the video like, "What's up, buddy?" to the wild cat. Listen, trolls: Colebourne has chased a bear away before. She is an animal whisperer. She's awesome, and she's got it covered, OK?

A whole new world

Are you in desperate need of a break from the repetitive monotony of your life, daydreaming of perhaps being on a palm-tree lined beach? And you know how even if you can't immediately make that place your reality, just the thought of being there makes you feel so much better? Expand your fantasy repertoire with this new Japanese exhibit. Artists created an immersive interactive garden of 2,300 floating flowers inspired by a Zen koan. Domo arigato, guys, for creating a beautiful world where person and flower become one.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

Vince Gasparro's: The kind of place that makes a neighbourhood.

Nick Gasparro had a hard time keeping up a phone conversation on Thursday behind the counter of his family butcher shop. Customers kept walking into the store, some in search of an Easter ham, others offering their condolences on the recent death of Vincenzo Gasparro, Nick's father and the founder of the family business.

"Hold on," Nick, 42, said to me over the phone.

Then I heard a woman's voice. "I just found out yesterday about your dad. I'm so sorry," she said.

"Thank you," Nick said. "Thank you for coming, honey."

Vince Gasparro's Meat Market has stood on Toronto's west-end corner of Bloor Street and Roxton Road since 1960. And it's exactly the kind of place that makes a neighbourhood worth living in.

They're in every Canadian city. Mom-and-pop shops, they're called dismissively.

They're not the country's economic leaders, if you go by GDP. Most of that is driven by mid-sized or large companies, as CIBC economist Benjamin Tal noted. Industry Canada doesn't even break down the contribution of companies with less than 49 employees (a group which makes up 30 per cent of the GDP).

But these micro-businesses also account for 75 per cent of companies that employ people in Canada. They are nimble, adaptable, the economic equivalent of the "oil that oils the machine," Tal said.

Plus, he added, "there are some things that you cannot measure."

For example, what does it mean when longtime customer Vanessa, 34, calls the butcher shop "an institution"?

How do you measure the impact of hiring the likes of 24-year-old Mik, who is also a musician, by offering him a flexible, reliable part-time job while he pursues his dreams?

What is the worth of a man like Vince, who knew everybody's name, and their kids, and their grandkids; who took IOUs when customers were short at the end of the month; who went to the funerals and wedding of his customers, and whose customers, in turn, filled an old stone church one rainy morning this week? These are intangibles, but they have an economic impact just by drawing people to want to call this corner of a city home.

It's challenging times for independent shops forced to compete against national chains with deep pockets. But without these kinds of businesses, and the people who run them, our cities would be all the more uniform, all the less human.

I asked Nick, who has been a butcher with his father for 20 years, how long he wanted to keep the store going.

"I don't know that, honey, for as long as I'm going to be here," he said. "Hopefully a long time."

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Your essential daily news

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Ferrell's fearless with the funny

GET HARD

Comedian is always up for slapstick promo stunts

IN FOCUS
Richard Crouse

Sitting on a bucket with his pants down? No big deal for Ferrell. Get Hard opens this weekend. CONTRIBUTED

You can tell Will Ferrell has a new movie coming out because he's doing the darndest things.

On March 12, he played for 10 Major League Baseball teams in five spring training games in one day. Since then he's roasted Justin Bieber, walked red carpets at South By Southwest, dressed as a leprechaun with David Letterman, appeared on The Tonight Show in drag as snack cake queen Little Debbie, and traded barbs with Jon Stewart while wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with dozens of pictures of Zach Galifianakis.

He's pulling out all the stops to make sure everyone knows Get Hard, his comedy about a rich man who hires a coach (Kevin Hart) to prep him for prison, opens this weekend.

A few years ago, I landed in the middle of one of Ferrell's outlandish publicity stunts.

In July 2012 he was stumping for The Campaign, a political satire co-starring Galifianakis. The hot-and-steamy Toronto summer afternoon began with the actors riding down Yonge Street, throwing out campaign buttons to passersby until they arrived at the Hockey Hall of Fame.

Inside, I hosted a press conference with them and Mayor Rob Ford. Onstage, actors posing as Mounties guarded the Stanley Cup as Ford, then the most famous, and controversial, politician in Canada, gave the guys advice on how to campaign. Nothing was rehearsed and everyone was a bit nervous as I brought the three to the dais.

Ferrell talked about what happened next on the Late Show with David Letterman.

"We step up to the mic. We're supposed to say a few words, and I say, 'How about a big round of applause for your mayor, Rob Ford.' It was literally ... not even a smattering of applause, just two people."

"It was just so silent that I actually had to comment on it. So I said, 'Mr. Mayor, that's a horrible ovation,' and the press corps burst out laughing. And he was just laughing. He didn't care. Just sweaty."

> **"It was just so silent that I actually had to comment on it. So I said, 'Mr. Mayor, that's a horrible ovation.'**
> Will Ferrell on doing a stunt with Rob Ford

Ford was a good sport and played along. He gave them each a miniature Stanley Cup, pinned "Rob Ford for Mayor" buttons on their chests and handed out his famous business cards, fridge magnets and bumper stickers before imparting some sage advice.

"It's very simple. Every person you meet, hand out a magnet and business card, and return people's phone calls. Customer service is No. 1" With a laugh he added, "and don't talk to the Toronto Star."

It may not have been the smoothest promotional stunt of all time, but it certainly was a memorable one.

The next year, Ferrell worked Ford into the promotion for Anchorman 2. By this time Ford's scandal-ridden term in office, fuelled by admissions of drug use, had rocketed him into the international spotlight.

Ferrell, in character as ridiculous San Diego newscaster Ron Burgundy, came out in support of Ford's re-election.

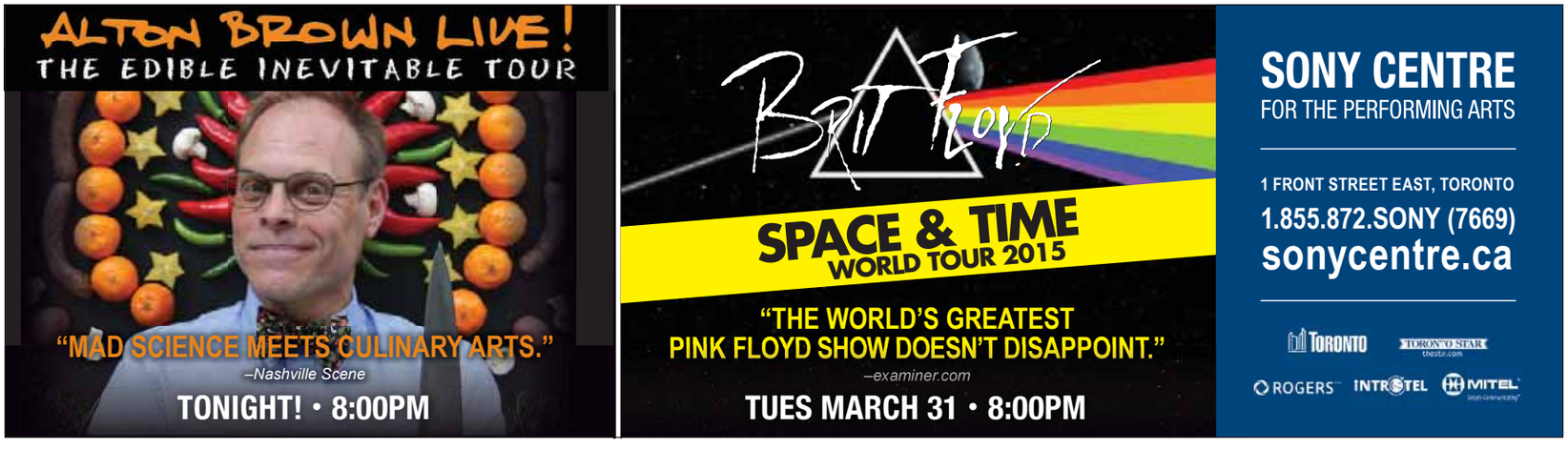
"Ron doesn't realize how much trouble Rob Ford is in," said Ferrell to Metro.

"He just thinks he's a great guy. Gregarious. Fun. Life of the party. Ron's advice would just be 'Keep doing what you're doing, it's obviously working.'"

He even wrote a campaign song to the tune of Loverboy's Working for the Weekend.

As usual, Ford took it all in stride, tweeting, "I had to laugh at my friend Ron Burgundy & his take on my 2014 re-election campaign song."

There's been no mention of Rob Ford in the promotion for Get Hard, but if Ferrell ever makes The Campaign 2: The Re-Election perhaps he'll give the former mayor a call.



Getting a real feel for movies

FUTURE OF CINEMA

Virtual reality technology catches eye of filmmakers

Matt Kwong
Metro | Life

Comfy seating. Hot popcorn. And a stereoscopic virtual-reality headset for your viewing pleasure. It's a new cinematic experience envisioned by Hollywood and electronics manufacturers keen to tap into the hot VR market.

In recent years, Microsoft, Sony, Facebook, Google and Samsung have assumed a "gold-rush mentality" for VR, tech analyst Kevin Restivo said.

"As the core technology becomes refined for the masses, they're looking for wider applications," he said. "The movies are an obvious one."

Whereas the usual movie-watching experience is a one-directional affair, VR lets you step inside a scene, giving you the feeling you can move around in a film's environment. If you see an image on screen, or if a character is to your left, you can turn your head instead to the right and explore your surroundings with a 360-degree view.

The technology definitely caught the interest of attendees at this year's Sundance film festival.

A section dedicated to VR filmmaking was a main attraction at the fest. Users donned 3D wraparound goggles to experience an original scene from Wild between Reese Witherspoon and Laura Dern.

Last month, premium cable network HBO and Lionsgate, the studio behind the $1.5-billion Hunger Games franchise, announced content creation deals for HTC's much-hyped Vive system.

Beyond gaming, it's "the next logical step" for the Vive, said Jeff Gattis, an HTC spokesman.

"We can take content and brands that are known, and just open up new windows of entertainment," he said. "Whether that's going to be full features or clips, at a minimum, it's the creation of immersive virtual reality experiences."

That immersion aspect is what most excites Tre Azam. His U.K. company manufactures MyndPlay, a brainwave-sensing headband which, when used with VR displays such as the Oculus, allows a viewer to "change the storyline" of a video based on emotional responses.

"We've got a MyndGuardian video that puts you into an attack scenario where you're being mugged," Azam said. "You can train your mind into going into fight or flight mode. Maybe you want to defend yourself instead of panicking."

Developers, he said, have built some videos with 32 possible interactions.

"Imagine you've got a 90-minute movie where every scene could have a different possibility thrown in," he said.

So far, studios have been mostly leveraging VR experiences to hype up their big productions.

In collaboration with Lionsgate, Samsung's Gear VR device released a short on March 20 to promote the second film in its popular Divergent series.

Insurgent: Shatter Reality starred actors reprising their roles from the films.

HBO has experimented with short movie-making for VR headsets as well.

Attendees at last year's South By Southwest lined up to demo a Game of Thrones experience using Facebook's Oculus Rift VR headset. Users joined the Night's Watch and climbed a ladder to the top of the 700-foot ice wall.

As for when full-length VR feature films might ever take off as main cinematic attractions? That's hard to tell, said independent filmmaker Elli Raynai, who is completing his VR short for the Oculus Rift.

"I don't know if virtual reality is going to replace cinema," Raynai said. "All I know is it has different rules, it presents a new way of telling stories, and that's exciting for filmmakers."

Q&A

Cinephile Jesse Wente, director of film programs at TIFF Bell Lightbox shared some thoughts on the technology.

On the lasting power of VR films: "I think we're a little early in the days to dismiss it as a gimmick."

On the solitude aspect of VR: "I think you'd be hard-pressed to create a physical communal experience if the idea is total immersion in a virtual world."

On the difference between VR and cinema: "I wouldn't rule out some kind of future in which virtual reality can offer something similar to the movie-going experience. But ultimately, seeing a movie is seeing a moving in cinema. There's been no way to recreate it for 100 years.

MATT KWONG/METRO

A scene from Insurgent: Shatter Reality for Samsung's Gear VR.

VIRTUAL REALITY

A look at the VR headsets

1 **Oculus Rift/Facebook (formerly Oculus Rift)** Two development kits released. No consumer release date yet. DK2 costs $350.

2 **Project Morpheus/Sony** Head-mounted display to be compatible with PlayStation 4 and PlayStation Vita gaming consoles. Anticipated early 2016 release.

3 **Google Cardboard/Google** Google's DIY device folds out from a piece of cardboard to turn a smartphone into a VR headset. Users can download the app and either purchase a toolkit online, or build one themselves by following free online tutorials.

4 **The Vive/HTC** Marketed as a "premium" virtual reality experience, and powered by SteamVR. Anticipated release in the spring.

5 **Samsung Gear VR/Samsung** This is the first head-mounted display to hit the market, and costs $199 US. The headmount was specifically designed to work with a Galaxy Note 4 smartphone.

6 **Virtual Boy/Nintendo** Released in 1995, then quickly discontinued the following year after poor sales and reports that some players were experiencing headaches from overuse. Originally retailed for around $180 US.

> **Imagine you've got a 90-minute movie where every scene could have a different possibility thrown in**
> Tre Azam of Myndplay

PHOTOS COURTESY HTC AND CANADIAN FILM CENTRE

Now in theatres

DRAMA

The Riot Club

Director: Lone Scherfig
Staring: Findlay Fox, Jessica Brown Findlay

Filthy. Rich. Spoiled. Rotten. A band of overprivileged rich boys run wild in this savagely funny satire of money, sex and power. In the elite realm of Oxford University, no society is more exclusive than The Riot Club, the ultra-selective fraternity for Britain's most privileged sons.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 67% **Audience:** +86%

ART HOUSE/DRAMA

White God

Director: Kornél Mundruczó
Staring: Zsófia Psotta, Sándor Zsótér

When young Lili is forced to give up her beloved dog Hagen, because its mixed-breed heritage is deemed 'unfit' by The State, she and the dog begin a dangerous journey back towards each other. At the same time, all the unwanted, unloved and so-called 'unfit' dogs rise up under a new leader.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 86% **Audience:** +84%

DRAMA

The Resurrection of a Bastard

Director: Guido van Driel
Starring: Goua Robert Grovogui

Ronnie is a bastard. And not just any bastard. Ronnie is an exceptional bastard. The hardest of the hard men, a gleefully heartless collector of debts whose world comes crashing down when a taste of his own violence splashes back upon himself.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

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Now in theatres

HORROR

It Follows

Director: David Robert Mitchell
Starring: Maika Monroe, Keir Gilchrist

After a strange sexual encounter, a teenager finds herself haunted by nightmarish visions and the inescapable sense that something is after her.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 94% Audience: 72%

ANIMATED

Home

Director: Tim Johnson
Staring: Jim Parsons, Rihanna

When Oh, a lovable misfit from another planet, lands on Earth and finds himself on the run, he forms an unlikely friendship with a girl named Tip who is on a quest of her own. Through a series of adventures with Tip, Oh comes to understand that being different and making mistakes is all part of being human.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 40% Audience: 69%

COMEDY

Get Hard

Director: Etan Cohen
Starring: Will Ferrell, Kevin Hart

Will Ferrell and Kevin Hart headline this Warner Bros. comedy about a wrongfully convicted investment banker who prepares for prison life with the help of the man who washes his car. Etan Cohen directs, with Ian Roberts and Jay Martel handling screenwriting duties.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 28% Audience: +95%

DRAMA

Boychoir

Director: François Girard
Starring: Kathy Bates, Dustin Hoffman

Stet, a troubled and angry 11-year-old orphan from a small Texas town, ends up at a Boy Choir school back east after the death of his single mom. Completely out of his element, he finds himself in a battle of wills with a demanding choir master who recognizes a unique talent in this young boy.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 67% Audience: +91%

DOCUMENTARY

That Guy Dick Miller

Director: Elijah Drenner
Starring: Lainie Miller, Dick Miller

You know the face, and have heard the voice, but just can't figure out where. The character actor's character actor, Dick Miller is nothing short of a living legend to those who delight in his every bit role.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: NOT YET REVIEWED Audience: +100%

DRAMA

The Wonders

Director: Alice Rohrwacher
Starring: Alba Rohrwacher, Maria Alexandra Lungu

Rohrwacher's richly textured sophomore feature centres on a family of beekeepers living in stark isolation in central Italy. The dynamic of their overcrowded household is disrupted by the arrival of a silently troubled teenaged boy taken in as a farmhand.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE

Critics: 100% Audience: +99%

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So many men, so much talent

INTERVIEW

Actress Patricia Clarkson gushes about co-stars in October Gale

Scott Speedman and Patricia Clarkson in October Gale. CONTRIBUTED

Patricia Clarkson's new thriller, October Gale, sees her working again with director Ruba Nadda, and starring opposite Callum Keith Rennie, Tim Roth and Scott Speedman.

"Can you imagine I got to be in a film with those men?" she says. "I arrived on the set and said, 'Oh my God, Ruba, I have died and gone to heaven.' Not only are they beautiful men, physically, but if you threw all their handsomeness out the window, they're gorgeous actors. First class ... singular actors."

The New Orleans native, an Academy Award nominee for Best Supporting Actress for her performance in Pieces of April, plays a doctor mourning the loss of her husband. For solace she retreats to a remote cottage in Georgian Bay. Her time of quiet reflection and healing is disrupted, however, by the appearance of a mysterious and seriously injured young man, played by Speedman.

October Gale is the second collaboration between Clarkson and director Ruba Nadda.

"Ruba and I are very similar gals," Clarkson says.

"We like our hair and our lipstick and our high heels. I have four older sisters and Rubba is truly like the little sister I never had. We are like family. We have a second language now. It's kismet. "I think I'm just the luckiest gal to know her and to have her so deeply in my life; in my professional life, in my personal life. I know her family now. I know her sisters ...We're just family and yet we are able to separate all of that when we enter the workplace. We're both workhorses. We're very high energy, we don't take no for an answer, we'll fight to the death. She's Syrian-Palestinian and I'm Southern, so watch out."

She's Syrian-Palestinian and I'm Southern, so watch out

Patricia Clarkson on her relationship with Ruba Nadda

Their first film together, Cairo Time, was the Best Reviewed Romance on Rotten Tomatoes for 2010 and soon they will begin work on a series for HBO. Clarkson says her on-set relationship with Nadda is based on respect and the director's unique vision.

"Ruba has the courage to make films that people want to make," she says, "the kind of movies auteurs think they're making, but she actually has the courage to do it."

RICHARD CROUSE/METRO

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What's next for Shailene

Still basking in the box-office success of Insurgent, Shailene Woodley just might outdo herself after the franchise ends. Judging by her peers Jennifer Lawrence and Kristen Stewart, who both went from blockbusters to award-winning careers, it's entirely possible. AFP

Eclectic roles like Kristen Stewart

Woodley and Lawrence both call to mind another actress who rose to global stardom in a high-grossing franchise: former Twilight star Kristen Stewart. Since the last Twilight movie, the actress has appeared in Walter Salles' adaptation of Jack Kerouac's On the Road, a film that took her to the Cannes Film Festival in 2012. After Snow White and the Huntsman, Stewart has graced the screen in a number of acclaimed films, including Sils Maria by French director Olivier Assayas and Still Alice with Julianne Moore.

Oscar glow like Jennifer Lawrence

The parallels between Divergent and The Hunger Games are obvious: both are sci-fi adventure stories with a strong-willed female protagonist and a dystopian setting. But there are also parallels between the career paths of the two stars: Woodley and Jennifer Lawrence. Both made a name for themselves on the big screen before age 20 thanks to indie roles. Lawrence claimed her first Oscar nomination for Winter's Bone, while Woodley grabbed a Golden Globe nomination for The Descendants, in which she co-starred with George Clooney.

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Linda Cardellini says the Florida Keys location of Bloodline is as much a part of the show as the cast. GETTY IMAGES

Linda finds the Keys to her heart

INTERVIEW

Star of Netflix's Bloodline is enthralled by Florida locale

Richard Crouse
Metro | Canada

Linda Cardellini's new show is filmed far from Hollywood. The former Mad Men co-star plays Meg Rayburn, wayward daughter of a large, secretive family in the Netflix series Bloodline. She co-stars with Kyle Chandler, Sam Shepard and Sissy Spacek, but says the Florida Keys location is as much a part of the show as the cast.

"It is otherworldly. It is different from anything I have known," she says.

"It is a place that has a duality to it. On one hand, it is extraordinarily beautiful and on the other there is this oppressive heat and slight danger that follows you around everywhere. When you're in the elements, there are a lot of things around you that are sometimes friendly to human beings and sometimes not so much. It's perfect for the show because it really shows this paradise and on the other side there are these really dangerous things."

When she was first approached to do the Bloodline, there wasn't even a script for her to read.

"There was a pitch," she says, "and I had a meeting with (producer) Glen Kessler and he spoke so beautifully with so much rich detail about who this person is, what she means to the family, what the story means. To me, that was very exciting — how much he had to say and how much he knew.

"It showed to me that the creators of the show were very interested in each and every one of the characters. To have the family dynamic be appealing you have to understand every facet of the family."

The pitch won her over, in part because she had just binge watched the legal drama Damages, the last show from the same producers.

"When I watched Damages, I loved how they wrote for women," she says.

"I thought what could have been viewed as a stereotype was introduced and explored in such a fashion that broke all those stereotypes and broke all those glass ceilings about what a female character could or couldn't be. To me that was very exciting."

"You don't have to make an appointment with the television"

Linda Cardellini on the joys of binge watching

Kyle Chandler and Cardellini in Netflix's Bloodline. SAEED ADYANI /NETFLIX

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What to do when the city goes dark

Lisa Evans
For Metro

Saturday evening, the city will turn off its lights from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Which begs the question: What to do? The kids may moan and groan at the idea of a night without the TV, computer or smartphone — and parents, too, may wonder what to do with their little ones — there are plenty of activities you can do as a family that will show kids that they don't need electricity to have fun.

Host an Earth Hour street party. Invite the neighbours over for an impromptu Earth Hour bash. Ask everyone to bring a candle and turn out all the lights. Serve up snacks that don't require power to heat up or cook, such as veggies and hummus and everyone's favourite — chocolate fondue (warmed with a candle). You can even get a little creative and cut up some fruit into the shape of stars and moon slivers aligning with the night's theme.

Star-gaze in the backyard. When was the last time you looked up at the city sky and gazed at the stars? With lights and pollution, it can be difficult to see anything but the moon. Earth Hour is the ideal opportunity to see the night sky. If weather permits, lay out some warm blankets and pillows in your backyard and lay back to gaze at the stars. Grab a book about the constellations and see how many you can find.

In this file photo, Matthew Ellwood, left, then 6, and Kai Sher, then 7, mark Earth Hour with candles in Roncesvalle Village in March 2013. VINCE TALOTTA /TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Play board games by candlelight. Remember what families did for entertainment before Farmville and Candy Crush? Break out your favourite board games, light some tea lights and have some good old-fashioned fun. Your kids won't even miss their video games and tablets.

Put on a shadow puppet show. Light a candle in front of a blank wall and use your hands to create animal puppets. Kids can guess which animal appears on the wall. Up the creative ante and make up a story to go along with your hand puppets.

Have a candlelit picnic. Pack some snacks inside a picnic basket and throw a blanket down on the floor for a blackout picnic. Play up the picnic feel by using disposable (and recyclable, of course) forks and plates. Since there's no cooking without electricity, get a raw foods cookbook in advance and have fun whipping up new raw creations.

Create glow-in-the-dark fun. Transform your living room or kids' bedrooms into glow-in-the-dark caves. Gather some coloured glow sticks, glow-in-the-dark toys or stickers and create your own illuminated space. Take the fun to the bath with glow-in-the-dark bath toys and place some glow-in-the-dark stars around the bathroom to resemble the starry sky.

More than an hour without lights

JENNIFER BARRY
For Metro

Every year, millions of people around the world turn out the lights to raise awareness about climate change.

But Earth Hour is about more than just flicking a switch.

First marked in Sydney, Australia, in 2007, the World Wildlife Fund's symbolic event has evolved into the world's largest grassroots movement for the environment.

Skeptical? Consider this: In 2014 alone, Earth Hour was the force behind more than 60 environmental outcomes including a ban on plastic bags in the Galapagos Islands, the planting of 17 million trees in Kazakhstan, and the installation of renewable energy, fuel-efficient stoves for families in Nepal and Madagascar

"Earth Hour has always been more than just about lights off. It's about people from all walks of life coming together throughout the year to show what they can do to protect the planet," says Andy Ridley, CEO and co-founder of Earth Hour.

Villagers in the Sunderbans, located in the Ganges Delta of Eastern India, show off solar lanterns and panels. WWF projects, like this, take place around the world, extending Earth Hour to a year-long global initiative for planet preservation. COURTESY OF WWF

"People are the lifeblood of the Earth Hour global community," Ridley continues. "They are true beacons of hope, demonstrating what happens when innovation and passion come together to address the biggest challenges of our time."

Success stories from around the globe illustrate how a new phase in the WWF initiative — Earth Hour Blue — is effecting real change. Launched last year, Earth Hour Blue involves crowdsourcing and crowd-funding to support conservation and sustainable development projects around the world. The mass-engagement project works through a mobile-friendly website, a platform to raise funds and get support.

From February to June 2014, 18 crowdfunding projects were launched.

> **"Climate change is not just the issue of the hour, it's the issue of our generation**
> Sudhanshu Sarronwala, chair of Earth Hour Global

Last year in Russia, for example, a conservation project helped protect five key species, including the critically endangered Far-Eastern Leopard. In Colombia, money was raised to address pollution in the Amazon rainforest. In China, tens of millions of people engaged in a crowd-sourcing campaign to solve air pollution.

In Australia, where the movement was born, fresh produce and farming communities are the focus.

The Australian campaign, #appetiteforchange, will highlight the need to cut carbon pollution and switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy for the sake of food and farmers.

LIGHTS OFF

The ins and outs of Earth Hour

Earth Hour, celebrated annually around the world, is led by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and supported by numerous other non-profit organizations.

While no one expects them to solve all the planet's problems, Earth Hour activities can trigger positive change that goes beyond the hour, says WWF-Canada president and CEO David Miller.

"The true impact of Earth Hour is in everyday actions and decisions," Miller says, "where individuals, businesses, cities and countries are making the necessary changes to protect ourselves and nature from the most devastating impacts of climate change."

The theme of this year's Earth Hour is — you guessed it — climate change. Here's more about the annual event.

This will be the ninth Earth Hour. The first Earth Hour took place in 2007 and involved just Sydney, Australia. Co-founder Andy Ridley and his colleagues hoped that other Australian communities might join in for 2008. It ended up spreading to 35 countries by the second year.

The rules of the game are simple. To mark Earth Hour, you're encouraged to turn off the lights in your homes or workplaces at 8:30 p.m. and leave them off for 60 minutes. You can use candles for light (but go for earth-friendly options, like beeswax or soy).

You should still put safety first. Only "non-essential" lights should be switched off, like the ceiling light in your kitchen (or the Christmas lights you haven't taken down yet). These don't include traffic lights or streetlamps, of course, or night lights in your home if you're heading upstairs to the bathroom. Another safety note: Never leave burning candles unattended.

There's a reason why it's scheduled for late March. During the spring equinox (or autumn equinox, if you're in the southern hemisphere), sunset is most likely to be at about the same time in multiple countries. It means we'll all be in darkness at 8:30 p.m., no matter where we live.

LISA BENDALL/FOR METRO

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CARIBBEAN

What you need to experience before the island changes

Vawn Himmelsbach
Metro | Travel

Cuba is heating up. Flights, hotel rooms and even casas particulares, the Cuban version of B&Bs, are in demand. Scores of tourists from Canada are flocking to the country after U.S. President Obama announced plans to restore diplomatic ties with Cuba.

Once the border opens up to Americans, it's expected that prices will increase as demand exceeds supply.

Cuba's political and economic future is shifting, so if you want to get a glimpse of a bygone era before it's gone — a 1950s freeze frame where iPads and Starbucks don't exist — then now is the time to pack your bags.

Old Havana

The capital city, where most travellers flock, is already fairly touristy — though it's a photographer's dream with its 1950s classic cars and crumbling art nouveau and colonial architecture.

If you want to get a sense of how Cubans really live, wander around Centro Havana. It's safe and easily walkable (Cuba is not known for violent crime), but the blazing heat may force you to stop for a coconut daiquiri or Cuba libre at one of Ernest Hemingway's former haunts — like El Floridita — to cool down.

Tour the coast

It's well worth venturing beyond Havana. Since you can't Google your way through this country (indeed, Gmail won't work here, even if you do find Wi-Fi), it means that hidden gems are still, in fact, hidden.

Since much of the country's environment has been protected, Cuba offers up pristine coastlines and wetlands. There's fear, however, that once borders open up and foreign developers move in, this could change. So now is the time to see a world relatively untouched by tourism — before it is.

Practise your Spanish and see some classic cars in the capital city, Havana. ISTOCK

Cuba has thousands of coral reefs that appear to be healthier than others in Caribbean waters thanks to decades of isolation from mass tourism, according to the Nature Conservancy. So you can snorkel around reefs where you'll encounter everything from stingrays to green sea turtles — maybe even a reef shark — with no other boat in sight.

The Cannarreos Archipelago

One way to do this is to sail Cuba's coastline. Canadian tour operator G Adventures, for example, recently launched a sailing trip that allows small groups of travellers to explore the islands of the Canarreos Archipelago, many of which are uninhabited.

The archipelago is made up of more than 300 islands and islets, most of which are uninhabited. Cayo Largo is the second-largest island, though it's only 26 kilometres long and three kilometres wide. Aside from stunning beaches, it's home to nesting sea turtles and flamingos. Then there's Cayo Rico, which is only accessible by boat. There's a beach bar here, but that's it. You can hang out with the iguanas and explore secluded coves that make you feel like you're on a deserted island (though pina coladas are never too far away).

Meet the people

While sun-seekers have been heading to the island nation on discounted all-inclusive resort packages for years, the best way to see the "real" Cuba before it changes is to get off the resort.

The locals easily live up to their reputation as some of the friendliest, most hospitable people on the planet, and it's a great way to practice your Spanish.

If you do opt to sail the coast, dock overnight at the marina in Cayo Largo and join the Cubans for a late-night dance party to pulsating Latin beats under a sky full of stars. Don't know how to salsa or do the cha-cha-cha? No matter.

You won't have any problem finding someone who will be happy to show you.

While you'll enjoy fresh seafood on the coast, it's also a first-hand experience of Cuban ingenuity. Step into a Cuban supermarket and you won't find much. There are no Pringles or Snickers bars.

There are few fresh vegetables. So to see your Cuban cook whip up new — and tasty — dishes each day out of limited ingredients (such as tinned veggies) really hits home how Cubans actually live under a U.S. trade embargo.

Toronto departures. Prices are per person based on roundtrip, economy class and valid on new individual bookings, subject to change without notice. Fares shown are valid from March 27 to 30, 2015, on specific dates in May 2015. Subject to availability at time of booking. Limited space. Flights operated by Air Transat and are offered by Transat Tours Canada Inc., with offices at 191 The West Mall, Suite 800, Etobicoke, Ontario M9C 5K8, TICO (Reg #50009486).

Come for surf, stay for supper

TOFINO

B.C.'s beach town has been cultivating its culinary scene

One of the more memorable meals chef Tim May says he prepared in Tofino on British Columbia's remote West Coast was a wedding feast for a young couple who just eloped.

The newlyweds from Toronto exchanged vows on the beach, ran back to their honeymoon nest and watched as May, described locally as a culinary rock star, cooked their romantic dinner.

"It was kind of bizarre in a way because there's this couple and this is their wedding dinner," said May. "They just got married on the beach with the justice of the peace and then they come back to their little vacation home and here I am standing behind the bar cooking them dinner."

May is one of the many highly trained and visionary chefs who have migrated to the Vancouver Island coastal community known more for surfing and whale watching to contribute to a growing culinary scene that is adding more flavour to Tofino.

Tofino's residents are always searching for good food to fuel their bodies, according to chef Lisa Ahier who owns Tofino's SoBo. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Located 315 kilometres west of Victoria, Tofino, population 2,000, and neighbouring Ucluelet, population 1,600, are massive tourism destinations, with their rugged coastal beauty and endless beaches. The area explodes with visitors in the summer months, with estimates of 22,000 people in the area on some days in July and August.

The growing list of award-winning restaurants is a product of the many retreats that offer visitors first-class treatment within the velvet embrace of coastal rainforests and roaring waves. But ask May and others who came to Tofino for the chance to kick back on the beach year-round, it is the locals who drive the scene, wanting it fresh, local and the best.

"Think of Vancouver Island as Europe," said May, who runs the RedCan Gourmet, an open-concept commercial kitchen where customers can interact with the chefs as they create West Coast dishes. "It's a New World Europe in a sense of the different kinds of micro climates and the farms that can grow certain things in specific areas. That's what Vancouver Island is."

Tim May's fresh ground sirloin burger. THE CANADIAN PRESS

IF YOU GO

Hungry?
If you find yourself hungry in Tofino, check out: RedCan Gourmet and SoBo, Fresh Food From Here and There.

Chef Lisa Ahier, who owns Tofino's SoBo, billed as sophisticated bohemian, agreed it's the locals who created and support the community's top-notch foodie scene.

"I have never seen a town with this few residents that has such a high level, consistently, of cuisine," said Ahier, who started in Tofino in 2003 with a food truck and now wins awards at her bricks-and-mortar location.

"The people who live here is why I do what I do," she said. "I set up my business 13 years ago for locals and the locals demand quality, the best fuel for their bodies. You can't fool our local clientele. They want good food that makes them feel great."

She's seen people who started in her restaurant as dishwashers and food preparation staff fall in love with the industry and open their own restaurants.

"Visitors can expect probably the freshest seafood they'll ever see," said Ahier, who recently published "The SoBo Cookbook."

"We have local people who harvest our gooseneck barnacles. Our oysters just came in 30 minutes ago. There's not a lot of transportation in our food. It's coming directly from the water to here."

May said local chefs pride themselves on working together even though they depend on the same customer base. The Tofino-Ucluelet Culinary Guild, which helps source the freshest and most in-season items for the restaurants, binds the locals, he said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

TRAVEL NOTES FROM AN AFRICAN SAFARI DEAL TO A NICARAGUAN ADVENTURE

African Safari sale
Intrepid Travel is offering 30 per cent off African safari adventures departing before June 30 if you book your trip by April 30. And it's not just two or three; there are more than 20 trips on sale, from seven days to 60: Kilimanjaro and the Serengeti, Victoria Falls and Ngorongoro Crater, Lake Nakuru and the Okavango Delta. Visit IntrepidTravel.com.

Nicaragua
"The Land of Lakes and Volcanoes" is gaining ground on Costa Rica and Panama as the new place to explore, and not just with the younger set looking for a cheap place to surf. Travellers wanting something different than the usual sun-

NICARAGUA TOURISM

spots will revel in the authenticity of Nicaragua. And since the turbulence of the 1970s and '80s, Nicaragua is now one of the safest countries in the region. May to October is the best time to go. Check out VisitNicaragua.us.

Scrubba Wash Bag
This looks like a dry bag, but it's actually a portable washing gizmo. Just add water, soap and your clothes, roll down the top a few times and clip the ends, expel the air inside, then scrub clothes clean in three minutes with the help of an internal, flexible washboard. $59 at mec.ca. DOUG WALLACE

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Exhibit explores Don Draper's world

POP CULTURE

New York museum sheds light as Mad Men returns

You don't need to be mad about Mad Men to savour Matthew Weiner's Mad Men at New York's Museum of the Moving Image.

This collection of hundreds of props, dozens of costumes, two full-scale sets and scads of notes and scripts from AMC's glorious drama series will surely thrill all Mad Men fans as they brace themselves for its final seven episodes (starting April 5).

But beyond any frisson from actually entering the sacred space of ad man Don Draper's 1960s office after seeing it on-screen so many times, or from standing inches from Megan's Zou Bisou Bisou mini-dress (displayed, alas, not by Jessica Pare but on a mannequin), the exhibit is more than a TV-focused spectacle. It's a resurrected world of Americana as frozen in time a half-century ago.

Item: When was the last time you saw an S&H Green Stamps Saver Book? You may spy a couple of them among the many props dressing the Ossining, N.Y., kitchen of Don and Betty Draper (which, like Don's office, was transplanted to this MOMI gallery from the L.A. studio where Mad Men was shot). Then turn your gaze past the vintage Lux liquid bottle at the sink and the ceramic knickknacks on the panelled wall over to the breakfast table, where a grocery list calls for such items as a can of peas, whipping cream and margarine.

To behold this intimate scene, which seems to breathe with life even absent its fictional residents, can make you feel downright voyeuristic.

Now don't forget and light up! Among the curios at hand are a circa '60s cigarette machine, numerous ashtrays and Don's totemic lighter, Betty's cigarette case and pack of Salems. On a wall are ads from Don's agency, such as "We'll meet you anywhere. Hilton" and "Relax. Lucky Strike."

For evidence of how painstakingly detailed Mad Men always was, note the TV Guide in the clutter on a secretary's desk: A label indistinguishable from the real thing designates the magazine's addressee as Sterling Cooper & Assocs on Manhattan's Avenue of the Americas — in type far too small for the camera to have noticed.

Matthew Weiner's Mad Men (a title that confers proper credit on the series' mastermind) has been a year in the works, according to exhibition curator Barbara Miller, who speaks gratefully of the collaboration with the museum by Weiner and his colleagues, even as "they gave us the freedom to do what we wanted."

What the museum wanted, she says, is more than a gallery of gathered artifacts. A corresponding goal was to shed light on this series' creative process, reaching back before its sets and costumes were designed and the cameras rolled.

With that in mind, the exhibition has resurrected the show's writers' room where, for seven seasons, Mad Men narratives and scripts blossomed.

Matthew Weiner's Mad Men will help its visitors understand how a great TV series came about. But it's also a '60s-spanning time trip that celebrates how Don Draper and his Mad Men comrades inhabited their world while it honours their flesh-and-blood contemporaries who made their home in that decade for real.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The cast of Mad Men: The final episodes of the series will begin on April 5. FRANK OCKENFELS/AMC

The set for Don Draper's office from Seasons 4-6 is displayed as part of the exhibition, Matthew Weiner's Mad Men at the Moving Image in New York. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Notes and storylines for Mad Men scribbled by series creator Matthew Weiner are part of the exhibition. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IF YOU GO

Visit the exhibition

The Matthew Weiner's Mad Men exhibit runs through June 14 at the Museum of the Moving Image in New York City. For hours, visit movingimage.us. Adults, $12; students with ID, $9; children 3-12, $6. Free admission Friday 4 p.m.-8 p.m.

DON DRAPER BENCH

Selfie spot for Mad Men fans

Mad Men fans can now take a selfie with Don Draper, thanks to a bench unveiled Monday featuring the fictional adman's silhouette.

Jon Hamm, the actor who plays Draper, posed for photos on the bench outside the Time & Life Building at 1271 Avenue of the Americas in midtown Manhattan.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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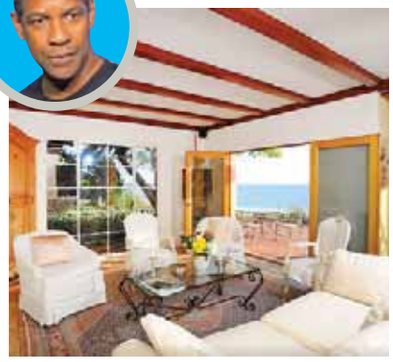
Airbnbs with star-power

Accommodation booking phenomenon Airbnb offers travellers a taste of where some of the world's great actors, artists and entrepreneurs have called home **LOREN CHRISTIE** METRO CANADA



Malibu, Calif. $640 per night

This former home of **Denzel Washington**, singers **Captain and Tennille** and **Jimmy Page** sits on a bluff overlooking Broad Beach, one of the area's most famous surfing beaches. From the oversized outdoor patio, you can watch the dolphins play. If you're a partier, take note, Malibu City Hall has a strict 'no noise after 10 p.m.' ordinance, and they enforce it. The house comfortably sleeps eight. Pets welcome.

Pacific Grove, Calif. $1,422 per week

This historic studio has a unique and rich literary history, having belonged to **John Steinbeck** in the early '40s. He wrote The Sea of Cortez while living here. The 350-square-foot studio has its original '20s architecture, which means short doorways and a warning for tall guests to "mind their heads." Located a kilometre from the Monterey Bay Aquarium and Cannery Row.

Omaha, Neb. Free?

You can win your chance to stay in the childhood home of **Warren Buffett**, one of the world's richest men, by entering an Air BnB on-line contest. See where the trail-blazing entrepreneur launched his first business selling chewing gum door-to-door at age six. The hook: You need to be a Berkshire Hathaway shareholder to enter. The rich keep getting richer for a reason!

Stone Ridge, N.Y. $2,586 per week

Located by the Mohonk Preserve, the Rubber House was built for the famed choreographer **Eugene Loring**. It was then owned by actor **Willem Dafoe** who faithfully retained the original dance studio and industrial kitchen. Situated on seven acres, the house is nestled within a grouping of giant moss-covered prehistoric boulders. The listing suggests you'll need a car, bike or perhaps a horse to get around.

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Shatho, from Botswana, is a healthy toddler after her surgery at SickKids. CONTRIBUTED

Herbie Fund changes lives

With donations from citizens

Living in Canada, it can be hard to imagine the health-care challenges that families face in some parts of the world. For many children, a surgical procedure that could alter or even save their life is simply not available to them where they live.

Shatho, from Botswana, is one such child. She was born with multiple intestinal problems that required complex surgery, but there were no local specialists to help her.

Dr. Georges Azzie of SickKids was working in central Africa when he met Shatho, just two months old at the time. He knew she would have to travel to Toronto, where a team of experts could perform the complicated operation she needed, though the cost was more than her family could afford. So Dr. Azzie and SickKids urologist Dr. Pippi Salle together supported the family's application to the Herbie Fund. Established in 1979, the fund brings children from around the world to SickKids for life-saving or life-altering surgeries they can't get in their own countries or regions.

Six months later, Shatho had a Herbie sponsor and she and her family arrived in Toronto. A team of surgeons from SickKids operated for seven hours to reconstruct Shatho's lower intestines. After a short recovery period, she returned to Botswana for post-operative care, and her prognosis is good.

Shatho's story isn't unique. With the support of community donors, volunteers, and the dedication of SickKids clinicians, the Herbie Fund has been making surgeries like this possible for more than 35 years. "The children require these operations to live a quality life. Our goal is to get them fixed up and get them home," says pediatric surgeon Dr. Jacob Langer, former head of general surgery at SickKids and Herbie Doctor of the Year in 2006.

He and the other doctors who care for these children donate their time and expertise and waive their surgical fees so that more children can be helped. "The number of children we can help is completely dependent on the money in the Herbie Fund, so every donation, small or large, makes a difference," he says. "If enough people send in $20, so many more children's lives can be dramatically changed."

GLOBAL REACH

The Herbie Fund was established by Paul and Gina Godfrey to help Herbie Quinones, a seven-month-old boy from Brooklyn who was born with a rare birth defect that made it hard for him to breathe while eating. Supported entirely by community donations, it has gone on to help more than 765 children from 105 countries.

SickKids Find out more about the Herbie Fund and make a donation: visit sickkidsfoundation.com/herbie.

Beyond Santa Monica's historic oceanside pier

The Pacific Park located on the Santa Monica Pier. RICHARD VOGEL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

DESTINATION

Classics and more to see in this paradise on L.A.'s edge

Planning a trip to Southern California but don't want to fight L.A. traffic? Check out the Santa Monica in all its picture-postcard beauty. From a funky old pier surrounded by some of the world's best beaches to its upscale shopping district, scores of art galleries, top-rated restaurants and bountiful nightlife, there are enough things in this little oasis just 19 kilometres west of downtown Los Angeles to keep you not only occupied but enthralled.

The beach in Santa Monica. JAE C. HONG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

What's new

Santa Monica Place: Transformed in 2010, this shopping mall is a bright, open-air gathering spot of upscale restaurants and stores that connects directly with the city's pedestrian-friendly Third Street Promenade, forming the heart of Santa Monica's downtown. The mall also provides an abundance of relatively reasonable parking within walking distance of the beach. A new-old addition to that beach is the Annenberg Community Beach House. Built in the 1920s by William Randolph Hearst for his companion, actress Marion Davies, it was acquired by Santa Monica and opened to the public in 2009. Tours of the guest house and its art gallery are free.

Classic attractions

Start by making a beeline to Santa Monica Pier, the 99-year-old landmark with an entrance sign proclaiming it as the final stop on Route 66, the historic highway John Steinbeck declared America's Mother Road. Here you'll find everything from musicians, snake handlers, artists and other street performers, to quiet areas set aside for fishing. In the middle of it all is an amusement park with a solar-powered Ferris wheel that carries riders 40 metres up. The wheel provides arguably the best panoramic views of the area. Near the pier's entrance is the Hippodrome, built in 1916 and home to a vintage carousel with hand-carved horses, only $2 to ride ($1 for kids).

As for the beach, it's a five-kilometre stretch, plenty to go around for surfers, swimmers, sunbathers and the like. You can check it all out by biking, roller skating or walking the boardwalk (actually made of concrete) that parallels the sand.

If there isn't a concert you want to see at McCabe's Guitar Shop (Christine Lavin and Holly Near will be there later this month), the nighttime destination is the Third Street Promenade. It rejuvenated Santa Monica's aging, moribund downtown when it was closed to cars in the late 1980s and remains the city's signature downtown area with upscale shops, restaurants, bars, boutiques, yoga studios, art galleries and the like.

Hanging out

On the way into town check out Bergamot Station Art Center. A collection of modest buildings near a maintenance yard in the section of town farthest from the beach, it's easy to overlook. But inside this 19th-century rail yard you'll find a small art museum and more than a dozen contemporary galleries displaying photos, sculptures, paintings and more. There's also a good, reasonably priced restaurant with an outside dining area. Or ask for directions to Food Truck Alley, a nearby street on the edge of the city's high-tech district where a dozen or more food trucks congregate every weekday lunch hour.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IF YOU GO

Getting around

- Basic one-way fares on the city's Big Blue Bus system are $1, with multiple-ride passes available at discounted prices. Visit bigbluebus.com for details.
- Several hotels provide shuttle service to the pier, and bicycle rentals are available. If you drive, be warned street parking is difficult to find in most tourist areas.

metro SPORTS
Your essential daily news

Marie-Philip Poulin will be Canada's captain when the worlds start Saturday

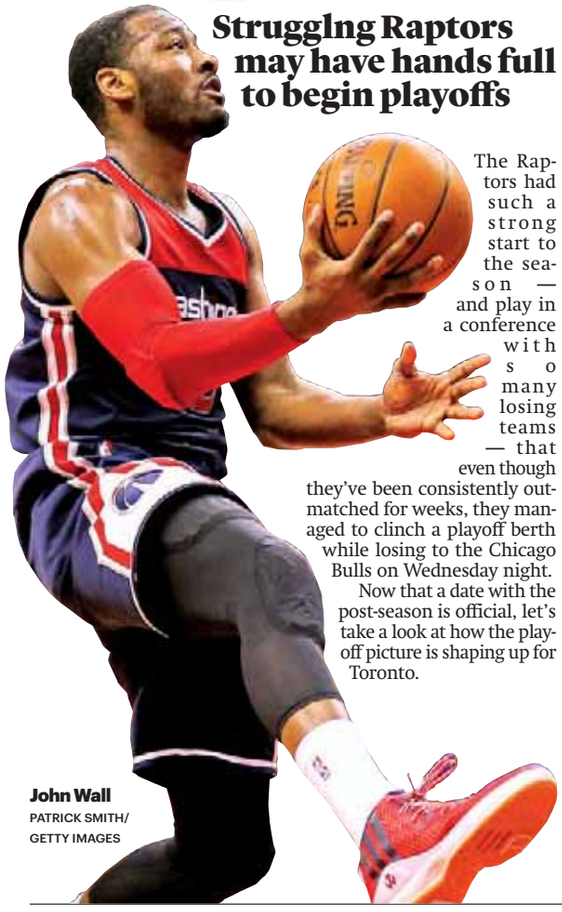
Breaking down the Raptors' potential 1st-round matchups

NBA

Struggling Raptors may have hands full to begin playoffs

The Raptors had such a strong start to the season — and play in a conference with so many losing teams — that even though they've been consistently outmatched for weeks, they managed to clinch a playoff berth while losing to the Chicago Bulls on Wednesday night.

Now that a date with the post-season is official, let's take a look at how the playoff picture is shaping up for Toronto.



John Wall
PATRICK SMITH/GETTY IMAGES

Washington Wizards

With 10 games to go in the regular season and the Bulls pulling ahead for the third seed in the Eastern Conference third seed, the odds are increasingly stacked in favour of a Raptors-Wizards matchup in the first round. Much like Toronto, the Wizards have been struggling of late, losing four straight games and posting a 7-11 record since the all-star break.

But unlike the Raptors, Washington has proven to be a strong defensive team. The squad is eighth in the league with points allowed per game (97.7) and has held opponents to just .437 per cent shooting from the field, on average.

On the other side of the ball, John Wall has been solid in the Washington backcourt, tallying 17.4 points and 9.8 assists per game this season, good enough for second in the NBA in that latter category.

Toronto swept its series against the Wizards this regular season, defeating them in three meetings, though the final two games came down to a single possession.

The Raptors are currently two games ahead of the fifth-place Wizards.

After a hot start to the season, Greivis Vasquez and the Raptors have cooled since the all-star break.
MARTA IWANEK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Milwaukee Bucks

A second possibility for the first round would see the Raptors square off against the Milwaukee Bucks, who hold the sixth spot in the east with a 32-36 record. For this matchup to go down, either Toronto or Milwaukee would have to light it up and climb the standings in the final stretch of the season.

Like Washington, Milwaukee is most notable on defence. They've held opponents to 97.4 points per game and lead the league in opponents' turnovers, with more than 16 on an average night.

A big factor for the Bucks is Michael Carter-Williams, who came into Milwaukee from Philadelphia at the trade deadline while the team's leading scorer, Brandon Knight, flipped to the Phoenix Suns. Though he's been criticized for his inconsistency, when MCW is hot, he can do a lot of damage, scoring more than 20 points in 11 games this season.

The Raptors are 2-1 against the Bucks this season, though they haven't played the team without Knight yet.

Other possibilities

The Raptors could also face the Heat if Miami has a solid run to close the regular season, or the Bulls, as scary as that may be, if the Wizards manage a dramatic push to leap Toronto and Chicago to take third place in the east.

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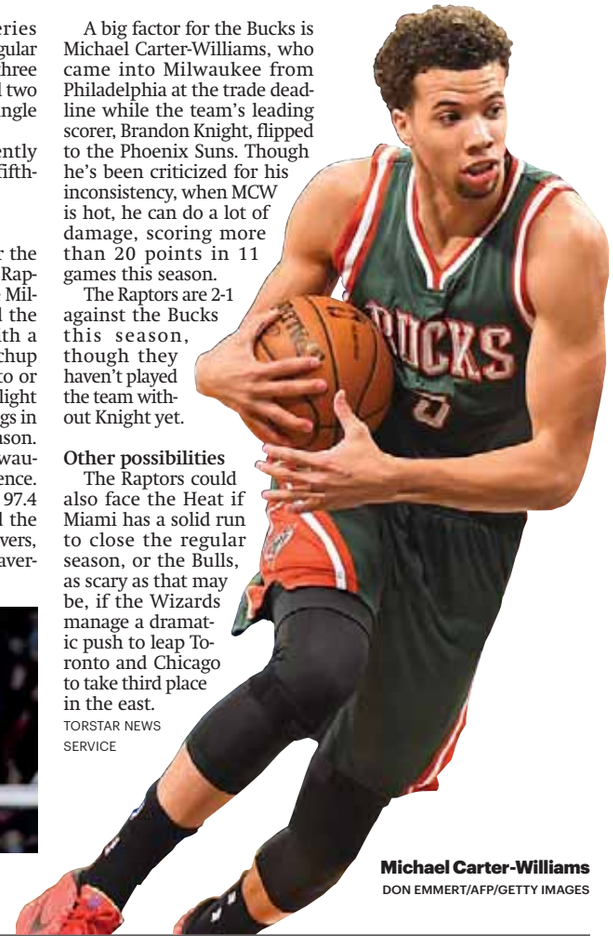
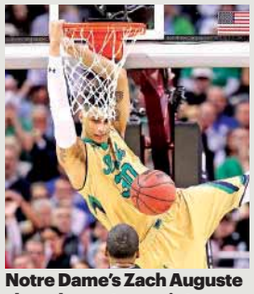


Michael Carter-Williams
DON EMMERT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

IN BRIEF



Notre Dame's Zach Auguste slams home two points on Thursday in Cleveland.
ANDY LYONS/GETTY IMAGES

Irish jolt Shockers to advance to Elite Eight

Notre Dame's march through March is picking up speed.

Demetrius Jackson scored 20 points and the third-seeded Irish dominated Wichita State 81-70 in the Midwest regional semi-finals on Thursday night to advance to the Elite Eight for the first time in 36 years.

Notre Dame will play either unbeaten Kentucky or West Virginia on Saturday night. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rangers hand Hamburglar his first regulation-time loss

Ottawa netminder Andrew Hammond suffered his first regulation-time loss on Thursday as the Senators fell to the New York Rangers 5-1.

Hammond allowed five goals on 22 shots and is now 14-1-1 to start his NHL career.

Chris Kreider had two goals and an assist as New York also put an end to Ottawa's seven-game winning streak. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL

Panthers pile hurt on the Leafs

Brandon Pirri scored twice as the Florida Panthers kept their slim playoff hopes alive Thursday with a 4-1 win over Toronto, adding to the Maple Leafs' seemingly endless misery.

The loss was the seventh straight for Toronto (27-42-6), which is a shocking 6-28-3 in 2015.

Roberto Luongo delivered a solid performance in goal and Jonathan Huberdeau, Steven Kampfer and Pirri scored second-period goals to put Florida (34-26-14) in front. Pirri added a late empty-netter for his 20th of the season.

NHL On Thursday

4	1
PANTHERS	LEAFS

Toronto's Jonathan Bernier was given the hook with 5:26 remaining in the second period after yielding three goals on 16 shots. The Leafs' No. 1 goalie has been pulled seven times this season.

Once again there were plenty of empty Air Canada Centre seats although the crowd was an announced at 18,831 which is officially a sellout. Capacity for hockey is considered 18,819. Monday's 2-1 loss to Minnesota before an announced crowd of 18,366 was the second non-sellout of the season and the smallest Leafs ACC crowd ever.

The Panthers started the day five points back of Ottawa and the second Eastern conference wild-card spot. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Golden pair picture-perfect

FIGURE SKATING

Duhamel, Radford undefeated since Sochi

Canadians Meagan Duhamel and Eric Radford have their perfect season.

Duhamel and Radford held off two Chinese teams in the free skate to capture gold in the pairs event on Thursday at the world figure skating championships in Shanghai.

After a seventh-place finish at the Sochi Games last year, Duhamel, from Lively, Ont., and Radford, from Balmertown, Ont., decided to continue their careers and skate another year — and haven't lost since.

They won all six international events they entered this season, including the Grand Prix Finals and Four Continents.

"Some dreams are so big that you can't even imagine them happening and it's all happening right now," said Radford.

"I could never have imagined it and I can't tell if it's a dream or reality."

Duhamel and Radford, who won bronze at the previous two world championships, were the leaders after the short program. It is Canada's first pairs title since Jamie Sale and David Pelletier won in 2001.

"This is a very personal victory. Every single victory along the way this season had a very special meaning," Duhamel said.

Sui Wenjing and Han Cong of China finished second, and 35-year-old veterans Pang Qing and Tong Jian, competing in their 16th world championships, took home the bronze.

Pang and Tong, who came out of retirement this year to finish their careers in Shanghai, now have six world medals (two gold, one silver, three bronze) to go with their silver medal from the 2010 Vancouver Olympics.

"I fulfilled (my partner's) wishes to come back to the rink," Tong said, before adding with a smile, "I certainly hope Pang Qing will not drag me back to the rink once again."

Also, Russian Elizaveta Tuktamysheva landed a triple Axel on her first leap of the figure skating world championships on Thursday, opening up a big lead over the rest of the field after the short program.

"When I landed the triple Axel, I got goosebumps and I thought, 'Is this a dream or did I really just do the triple Axel at the world championships?"' said Tuktamysheva, 18.

Only a handful of women skaters have successfully landed a triple Axel in international competition, among them Tonya Harding, Midori Ito and Mao Asada. Tuktamysheva landed the difficult jump in one of the biggest competitions of her career after only practising it for a couple months.

THE CANADIAN PRESS WITH FILES FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Meagan Duhamel and Eric Radford of Canada skate their way to the gold medal during the pairs free skate at the world figure skating championships in Shanghai on Thursday. JOHANNES EISELE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

> **We've worked so hard to get here and it's amazing.**
> Eric Radford

Building a Better Transit System

Spadina Avenue and College Street Intersection Construction

The TTC and City of Toronto will be working to improve rail transit, road, streetcar platform and sidewalk infrastructure at Spadina Avenue and College Street, which will require a full closure of the intersection.

We encourage you to continue to support local businesses during construction. Access to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, including the emergency department entrance, will be maintained at all times.

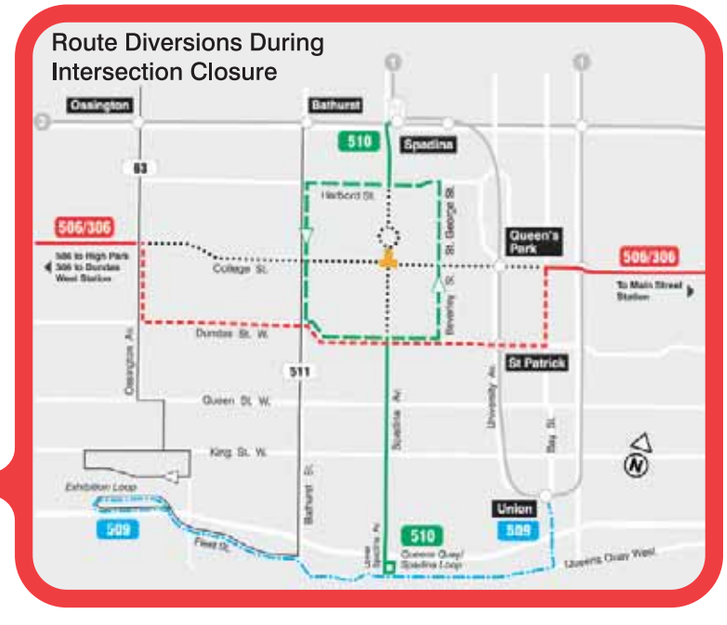
What will this mean for TTC customers?

March 29 to May 9, 2015:

- **510 Spadina:** buses will replace streetcars on this route and operate between Spadina Station and Queens Quay/Spadina Loop only (not to Union Station). Fare payment by PRESTO will not be available. Proof-of-Payment (POP) will continue to be in effect.
- **509 Harbourfront:** new streetcars will operate on this route and provide service on Queens Quay West between Exhibition Loop and Union Station. Fare payment by PRESTO will be available (new streetcars only). Proof-of-Payment (POP) will be in effect.

April 6 to April 27 (6 a.m.), 2015:
(timelines subject to change)

- Full intersection closure of Spadina Avenue and College Street.
- **506/306 Carlton** streetcars diverting: no service on College Street between Ossington Avenue and Bay Street.
- **510 Spadina** replacement buses diverting: no service on Spadina Avenue between Harbord Street and Dundas Street West.
- Expect longer than normal travel times.



Please visit ttc.ca for more information, and visit toronto.ca/constructioninfo for construction updates.

Thank you for your patience as we continue to improve transit in Toronto.

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TORONTO

Ex players suing NHL have Bettman gripe

NHL

Plaintiffs want league to allow them access to Commissioner

The former players suing the NHL over concussion-related problems have accused the league of blocking access to Commissioner Gary Bettman for testimony in the case.

Plaintiffs in the federal class-action complaint filed a memorandum requesting Bettman's deposition by July 1. That brief came shortly after U.S. District Judge Susan Richard Nelson issued her order Wednesday denying the league's motion to dismiss the complaint.

Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly, in a statement sent Thursday to The Associated Press, denied the NHL was trying to stall or stonewall the attempt to depose Bettman.

"We will be opposing that request on the basis that we believe that the deposition at this stage of the litigation, when there has been no meaningful discovery, is premature," Daly said. "We are not taking the position that the Commissioner can never be deposed; rather, only that it is too early to depose him that quickly."

Attorneys for the former players, citing prior filings by the league, wrote that the NHL has designated Bettman "as the most knowledgeable witness about this case's facts."

The plaintiffs are seeking unspecified damages and medical monitoring for neurological disorders. They've argued the league had the knowledge and resources to better prevent head trauma, failed to properly warn players of such risks and promoted violent play that led to their injuries.

This combination of several lawsuits by more than 200 former NHL players was formally filed last October.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman GETTY IMAGES

NFL

Hernandez fiancée to testify at trial

The fiancée of former New England Patriots player Aaron Hernandez will be called to testify in his murder trial Friday, two people with knowledge of the matter told The Associated Press.

Shayanna Jenkins was granted immunity by the court in February, which means she can be compelled to testify or face time behind bars. There had been a question over whether prosecutors would call Jenkins, who has been in a relationship with Hernandez, 25, since high school and is the mother of his two-year-old daughter.

The two people spoke to the AP on Thursday on condition of anonymity because of a gag order that's in place. Jenkins, 25, has pleaded not guilty to perjury.

Prosecutors say she lied to a grand jury investigating the June 17, 2013, killing of Odin Lloyd, who was dating her younger sister, Shaneah. Lloyd was found shot to death at an industrial park less than a mile from the home that Jenkins and Hernandez share.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

France fall to buoyant Brazil

Neymar scored and midfielder Willian set up two as Brazil beat France 3-1 on Thursday in another step in rebuilding its credibility. Brazil remains unbeaten since hosting the 2014 World Cup, where it lost 7-1 to Germany in a semi-final shocker.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Terry extends Chelsea deal

Captain John Terry will be at Chelsea for at least one more season after earning a contract extension in recognition of his enduring value to the team. Terry, 34, remains one of league-leading Chelsea's most consistent and influential players, and has made 661 appearances since 1998. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Directions

1. Dust chicken with 3 tbsp of flour. In large skillet sprayed with vegetable oil, sauté chicken for 3 minutes or just until no longer pink. Set aside.

2. In the same skillet, add oil and sauté onions, curry paste, ginger and garlic for 3 minutes, then add red bell pepper and sauté for 2 minutes. Set aside.

3. In a bowl, combine coconut milk, 2 tbsp flour, fish sauce and sugar and mix until flour has dissolved. Add to onion mixture along with chicken, and on a medium heat, cook just until sauce has slightly thickened, about 3 minutes.

4. Serve over cooked rice or noodles (if using) and garnish with chopped cashews and cilantro.

Ingredients
- 12 oz boneless, skinless chicken breast, sliced into 1/2-inch wide slices
- 5 tbsp all-purpose flour, divided
- 2 tsp vegetable oil
- 2 cups sliced onions
- 2 tbsp red curry paste or to taste
- 1 tbsp minced ginger
- 1 1/2 tsp minced garlic
- 2 cups sliced red bell peppers
- 1 1/2 cups canned light coconut milk
- 1 tbsp fish sauce
- 1 tsp brown sugar

Garnish
- 1/4 cup toasted chopped cashews
- 3 tbsp chopped cilantro
- 3 cups cooked rice or rice noodles (optional)

Nutrition per serving
- Calories 352
- Protein 38.4 g
- Carbohydrates 18.8 g g
- Fibre 3.1 g
- Total fat 13 g
- Saturated fat 4.9 g
- Cholesterol 250 mg
- Sodium 450 mg

PHOTO: ROSE REISMAN

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BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN

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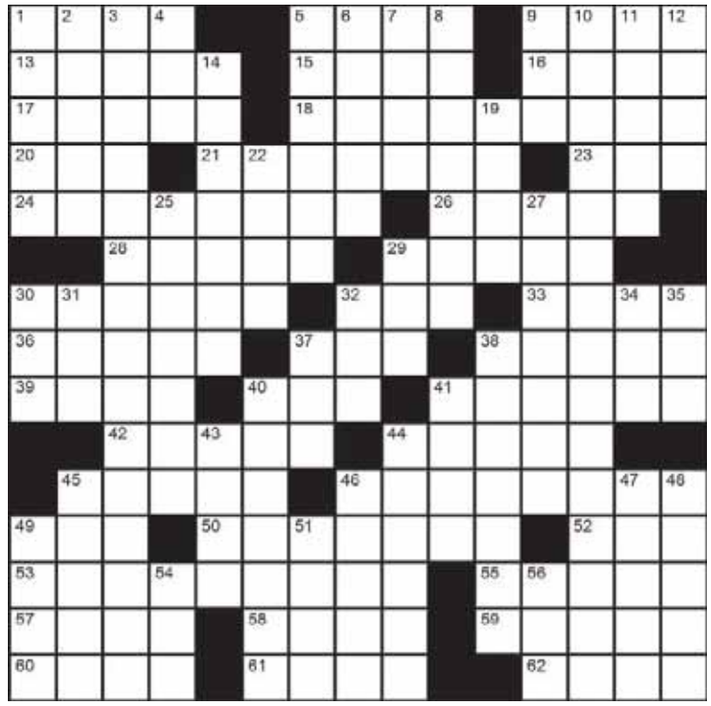

ACROSS
1. Canada's historic exports
5. British group, with Manfred
9. Island: Spanish
13. Clark's legendary 1939 movie role
15. Mr. Blacc of song
16. Irving and Grant
17. Place to connect in Chicago
18. Circus performer's prop: 2 wds.
20. South, in Portugal
21. Suspiciously
23. Tree of Hawaii
24. Michel __, Montreal Canadiens head coach
26. Movie mermaid
28. Chimney-like
29. Stew
30. "Dis-Moi, Dis-Moi" chanteuse
32. It gets pumped
33. Music key, _ _.
36. Purport
37. Wickedness
38. Celebrity chef Guy
39. Apportion
40. Wear
41.Magician
42. TV actor Rob
44. Actress Ms. Brewster
45. He's a helluva guy
46. Hamilton's AHL team
49. Traveller's delay
50. Canadian singer Ms. Reno
52. Horizontal rest
53. Those supervising
55. Big carrier of blood
57. "Game of Thrones" actress Ms. Headey
58. Kind of mackerel
59. Deep __ (Restaurant appliance)
60. Bohemian
61.Zest
62. Sleep Country Canada products

DOWN
1. Decorate the cake
2. "Yup."
3. Royal LePage worker: 3 wds.
4. Water channel, e.g.
5. Detective Vic __ (Michael Chiklis' role on "The Shield")
6. "Robin Hood" (2010) minstrel, __ A'Dayle
7. Midday
8. "The Price Is Right" prizes: 2 wds.
9. Mr. Somerhalder
10. Classic order at Montreal's since-1927 famous eatery
11. Disinfectant brand
12. Between ports
14. Rita's _ _ (Cape Breton's 'steeped'-in-tradition establishment opened by Rita MacNeil in the 1980s)
19. Emperor of Rome
22. In __ (As originally placed)
25. Most pink
27. Sort of salt
29. Prohibit
30. Ancient 1900
31. Tact' suffix
32. Saloon supply
34. Flawed in a way [abbr.]
35. Nest: French
37. Maritime message
38. Ancient statue's modesty preserver: 2 wds.
40. "Let's Hear It for the Boy": 1984 hit for __ Williams
41. Mr. Disney
43. Labels
44. Feigns: 2 wds.
45. Rescuer
46. Yogi of famous quotes
47. __ community (Exclusive residences locale)
48. Boxes
49. 1970 Kinks tune
51. Portraitist, Alice __ (b.1900 - d.1984)
54. Mr. Romano
56. Ball

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
If something feels good then just do it. As long as it is moral, it does not matter what others might think about it. You have never been one to let criticism stop you.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Forget about financial matters and focus on your family. Get things in perspective today and remind yourself that, in the greater scheme of things, money is only bits of paper.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Make sure you are on the move because the more people you meet, the more opportunities will come your way in the near future. There is also a chance you could meet someone new to love.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Don't let those who say you are behaving in an illogical manner persuade you to change your ways. What you are doing may look silly to them but from your point of view it makes sense.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Don't take on extra tasks over the next 24 hours. With the commitments you already have you are likely to be on the go from first thing in the morning to last thing at night.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
If you admit you need help today you will be overwhelmed by offers of assistance. But don't take the easy way out and let friends and colleagues do everything for you.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
A new relationship will start today or over the weekend. It may or may not be romantic in nature but whatever guise it takes it will be fun. This is also a good time to interact with large groups of people.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You will go out of your way to be nice to people today — even with those who have not always been nice to you in the past.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Your generosity knows no bounds: you want to do everything for everyone. Common sense should tell you that isn't actually possible but you will do your best to make a positive difference in the next 24 hours.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
The intensity of your emotions could catch you by surprise today, so stay in control and don't overreact. If you do go too far you may be a bit embarrassed later when you realize what was said and done.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
This is a good day to patch up disputes with loved ones. You will find it easier than usual to admit that you were to blame for what went wrong.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You will find it difficult to make up your mind about something but that's OK. The planets indicate it will pay to put off a decision about a money matter until early next week.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

6					7			3
	8						2	
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